



**Ordinary meeting business paper**

**Wednesday, 21 August 2024**

commencing 10.00 am

Rous Administration Centre (L4), 218-232 Molesworth Street, Lismore

## **OPENING OF THE MEETING**

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In accordance with clause 5.21 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, attendees at today's Council meeting are advised that this meeting is being 'live' streamed (except for the confidential session).

- All speakers should refrain from making any defamatory comments or releasing any personal information about another individual without their consent.
- Council accepts no liability for any damage that may result from defamatory comments made by persons attending meetings. All liability will rest with the individual who made the comments.
- This meeting must not be recorded by others without the prior written consent of the Council in accordance with Council's Code of Meeting Practice.

Please ensure that mobile phones and other electronic devices are turned off or are in silent mode for the duration of the meeting.

## **STATEMENT OF ETHICAL OBLIGATIONS**

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In accordance with clause 3.23 of Council's Code of Meeting Practice, councillors are reminded of their Oath or Affirmation of Office made at or before their first meeting of the council made under section 233A of the Act, to undertake their civic duties in the best interests of the people they represent and to faithfully and impartially carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in them under the *Local Government Act 1993* or any other Act, to the best of their ability and judgement.

## **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

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Councillors are reminded of their obligations under Council's Code of Conduct to disclose and appropriately manage conflicts of interest in matters being considered at council meetings. All declarations of conflicts of interest will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which the declaration was made.

## **APPLICATIONS TO ATTEND BY AUDIO VISUAL LINK**

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In accordance with clause 5.18 and 5.19 of Council's Code of Meeting Practice, Councillors may attend and participate in meetings by audio-visual link with the approval of the Council.

Requests by Councillors for approval to attend a meeting by audio-visual link must be made in writing to the General Manager prior to the meeting in question and provide reasons why the Councillor will be presented from attending the meeting in person.

Councillors attending a meeting by audio-visual link are reminded that they must ensure that no other person is within sight or hearing of the meeting at any time that the meeting is closed to the public under section 10A of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Note: Consistent with clause 5.44 of Council's Code of Meeting Practice, attendance by Council staff at meetings of the Council by audio-visual link shall be with the approval of the General Manager.

**Copy of: CODE OF MEETING PRACTICE / CODE OF CONDUCT**

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# AGENDA

1. **Opening of the meeting**
  2. **Acknowledgement of Country**  
*Council would like to show its respect and acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Land, of Elders past and present on which this meeting takes place.*
  3. **Apologies and applications for a leave of absence or attendance by audio-visual link**
  4. **Confirmation of Minutes of previous meeting**  
Ordinary Council meeting held 19 June 2024..... 1 - 9
  5. **Confirmation of Council Extraordinary Minutes**  
Meeting held on 17 July 2024..... 10 - 12
  6. **Disclosure of Interest**
  7. **Chair's Minute**
  8. **Matters of urgency / Questions with notice**
  9. **Notices of Motion**
  10. **Presentations**
    - 10.1 Laurie Lefcourt (Chair) - Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Annual Performance Report ..... 13 - 16
  11. **General Manager reports**
  12. **Group Manager, Organisational Services reports**
    - 12.1 Preliminary 2023/24 End of Financial Year Summary and Budget Carry Forwards ..... 17 - 32
    - 12.2 Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee - meeting update ... 33 - 62
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<b>17.</b>	<b>Close of business</b>	

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**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF ROUS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD  
WEDNESDAY, 19 JUNE 2024 AT ADMINISTRATION OFFICE, 218-232 MOLESWORTH  
STREET, LISMORE**

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**1 OPENING OF MEETING**

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The Chair opened the meeting at 10.05 am.

In attendance:

Councillors

- Cr Robert Mustow, Richmond Valley Council (Chair)
- Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Ballina Shire Council (Deputy Chair)
- Cr Rod Bruem, Ballina Shire Council
- Cr Michael Lyon, Byron Shire Council
- Cr Sarah Ndiaye, Byron Shire Council
- Cr Andrew Gordon, Lismore City Council
- Cr Big Rob, Lismore City Council

Council Officers:

- Phillip Rudd, General Manager
- Helen McNeil, Group Manager Organisational Services
- Adam Nesbitt, Group Manager Operations
- Andrew Logan, Group Manager, Planning and Delivery
- Jonathan Patino, Finance Manager

**2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

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*Council showed its respect and acknowledged the Traditional Custodians of the Land, of all Elders, on which this meeting took place.*

**3 APOLOGIES AND APPLICATIONS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE OR ATTENDANCE  
BY AUDIO-VIRTUAL LINK**

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**RESOLVED [21/24]** (Cadwallader/Lyon) that Council accept Cr Sandra Humphrys apology for being unable to attend the Council meeting.

<b>Apologies and applications for leave of absence or attendance by audio-virtual link (Resolution)</b>		
For	Cr Rod Bruem, Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Michael Lyon, Cr Robert Mustow and Cr Big Rob	6
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	Cr Sarah Ndiaye	1
<b>Carried</b>		

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**4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**


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**RESOLVED [22/24]** (Gordon/Lyon) that the Minutes of the meeting held 17 April 2024 be approved as presented.

<b>Confirmation of Minutes of previous meeting (Resolution)</b>		
For	Cr Rod Bruem, Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Michael Lyon, Cr Robert Mustow and Cr Big Rob	6
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	Cr Sarah Ndiaye	1
<b>Carried</b>		

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**5 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING**


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**RESOLVED [23/24]** (Cadwallader/Gordon) that the Minutes of the extraordinary meeting held 15 May 2024 be approved as presented.

<b>Confirmation of Minutes of Extraordinary Council meeting (Resolution)</b>		
For	Cr Rod Bruem, Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Michael Lyon, Cr Robert Mustow and Cr Big Rob	6
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	Cr Sarah Ndiaye	1
<b>Carried</b>		

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**6 DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**


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- Councillor Big Rob declared a pecuniary interest in *Agenda item 13.1 Workplace consolidation - status update report June 2024 and will vacate the Council meeting for discussion and voting on that item.*
- General Manager declared a pecuniary interest in *Agenda Item 13.2 Chair's Minute: Annual Performance Review – General Manager and will vacate the Council meeting for discussion and voting on that item.*

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**7 MATTERS OF URGENCY**


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Nil.

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**8 NOTICES OF MOTION / QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE**


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Nil.

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**9 GROUP MANAGER ORGANISATIONAL SERVICES**


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**9.1 Final draft Operational plan (incorporating the 2024/25 Budget and 'Revenue' policy)**

**RESOLVED [24/24]** (Lyon/Cadwallader) that Council:

1. Note no submissions were lodged by members of the public during the exhibition period.
2. Receive and note staff submissions as outlined in this report.
3. Adopt the final draft Operational Plan (incorporating the 2024/25 Budget and 'Revenue' policy) as attached to this report.

<b>Final draft Operational plan (incorporating the 2024/25 Budget and 'Revenue' policy) (Resolution)</b>		
For	Cr Rod Bruem, Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Michael Lyon, Cr Robert Mustow and Cr Big Rob	6
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	Cr Sarah Ndiaye	1
<b>Carried</b>		

**9.2 2024 Local Government NSW Annual Conference motion**

**RESOLVED [25/24]** (Rob/Cadwallader) that Council support the submission of the proposed motion outlined in this report to the Local Government NSW Annual Conference being held on 17-19 November 2024.

<b>2024 Local Government NSW Annual Conference motion (Resolution)</b>		
For	Cr Rod Bruem, Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Michael Lyon, Cr Robert Mustow and Cr Big Rob	6
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	Cr Sarah Ndiaye	1
<b>Carried</b>		

**9.3 Retail water bad debt write-off**

**RESOLVED [26/24]** (Cadwallader/Bruem) that Council approve the write-off of \$7,922.94 in water charges from Oats' account (10625-10000-2).

<b>Retail water bad debt write-off (Resolution)</b>		
For	Cr Rod Bruem, Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Michael Lyon, Cr Robert Mustow and Cr Big Rob	6
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	Cr Sarah Ndiaye	1
<b>Carried</b>		

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**10 GROUP MANAGER PLANNING AND DELIVERY REPORTS**

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10.1 Woodburn Flood recovery and Water Quality Improvement Program - Tender Award

**RESOLVED [27/24]** (Cadwallader/Bruem) that Council:

1. Accept the tender submission made by Ledonne Constructions Pty Ltd of \$1,580,623.30 incl. GST (lump sum contract price) for the Woodburn Bores Replacement Infrastructure Design and Construct contract (Contract); and
2. Authorise the General Manager to sign the Contract on behalf of Council.

<b>Woodburn Flood recovery and Water Quality Improvement Program - Tender (Resolution)</b>		
For	Cr Rod Bruem, Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Michael Lyon, Cr Robert Mustow and Cr Big Rob	6
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	Cr Sarah Ndiaye	1
<b>Carried</b>		

*Councillor Sarah Ndiaye joined the meeting 10:25am*

10.2 Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative

**RESOLVED [28/24]** (Cadwallader/Gordon) that Council receive and note the proposed arrangements for Stage 1 implementation of the Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative.

<b>Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative (Resolution)</b>		
For	Cr Rod Bruem, Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Michael Lyon, Cr Robert Mustow, Cr Sarah Ndiaye and Cr Big Rob	7
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

10.3 Mullumbimby connection to the Rous bulk supply

**RESOLVED [29/24]** (Lyon/Bruem) that Council resolves:

1. Byron Shire Council will not be required to make capital connection contributions, should they request to permanently connect the Mullumbimby local water supply area to the Rous County Council bulk water supply.
2. Any requests to permanently connect to the Rous bulk water network will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis utilising the methodology within this report.



<b>Mullumbimby connection to the Rous bulk supply (Resolution)</b>		
For	Cr Rod Bruem, Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Michael Lyon, Cr Robert Mustow, Cr Sarah Ndiaye and Cr Big Rob	7
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

10.4 Marom Creek Water Treatment Plant - update  
Item retracted and will be placed in a future meeting.

## **11 POLICIES**

11.1 Policy review - Pensioner Concession policy, Retail Water Customer Account Assistance policy

**RESOLVED [30/24]** (Cadwallader/Ndiaye) that Council: -

1. Revoke the [Pensioner Concession policy](#) dated 19 November 2014 and any policy revived as a result of the revocation.
2. Publicly exhibit the revised draft Retail Water Customer Account Assistance policy(Attachment 1) for a period of 28 days, and:
  - (a) Should no public submissions be received:
    - (i) The [Retail Water Customer Account Assistance policy](#) dated 17 August 2022 is revoked and any policies revived as a result of the revocation effective 19 June 2024; and
    - (ii) The revised Retail Water Customer Account Assistance policy is adopted effective 19 June 2024.
  - (b) Should any public submission be received, those submissions, and the proposal in relation to the revocation and adoption of the Retail Water Customer Account Assistance policy, be considered by Council at its next meeting.

<b>Policy review - Pensioner Concession policy, Retail Water Customer Account Assistance policy (Resolution)</b>		
For	Cr Rod Bruem, Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Michael Lyon, Cr Robert Mustow, Cr Sarah Ndiaye and Cr Big Rob	7
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

**12 INFORMATION REPORTS (COVER REPORT)**

**RESOLVED [31/24]** (Rob/Bruem) that the following information reports be received and noted:

1. Water production and consumption – May 2024
2. Investments
3. Audit, Risk and Implementation Committee meeting – 30 April 2024
4. Councillor Ndiaye’s Delegate Report – Myall Creek Massacre Commemoration Trip with Rous County Council
5. Councillor Ndiaye’s Delegate Report – Rainforest Connections 2024 Conference
6. Reports/Actions pending.

<b>Information reports (cover report) (Resolution)</b>		
For	Cr Rod Bruem, Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Michael Lyon, Cr Robert Mustow, Cr Sarah Ndiaye and Cr Big Rob	7
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

**13 CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS**

MOVED TO CLOSED COUNCIL

**RESOLVED [32/24]** (Cadwallader/Bruem) that Council move into Closed Council with the press and public excluded from the meeting based on the grounds detailed below:

<b>Report</b>	<b>13.1 Workplace consolidation – property disposal</b>
<b>Grounds for closure</b>	1. Section 10A(2)(d) commercial information of a confidential nature that would, if disclosed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i). prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it, or</li> <li>ii). confer a commercial advantage on a competitor of the Council, or</li> <li>iii). reveal a trade secret, <b>and</b></li> </ol> 2. (g) matters affecting the security of the council, councillors, council staff or council property,
<b>Report</b>	<b>13.2 Annual Performance Review – General Manager</b>
<b>Grounds for closure</b>	1. Section 10A(2) personal matters concerning particular individuals (other than councillors).

**CARRIED**

The meeting moved to Closed Council at 11:10am

*Councillor Big Rob left the meeting 11:10am.*

13.1 Workplace consolidation - status update June 2024

**RESOLVED [33/24]** (Gordon/Cadwallader) that Council:

1. Approve the sale methodology outlined in this report for the following properties:
  - (a) 131 Kyogle Street, South Lismore,
  - (b) 320 Wyrallah Road, Monaltrie, and
  - (c) 20 Conway Street, Lismore.
  
2. In relation to the sale of the above properties, for a period of 24 months from the date of this resolution:
  - (a) Authorise the General Manager to do and sign all things necessary to appoint a selling agent/s.
  - (b) Approve an annual advertising budget of \$15,000.
  - (c) Authorise the Chair and General Manager to sign the necessary documentation underseal to affect the sale/s in accordance with (1) above.
  
3. Endorse the exit strategy for 218-232 Molesworth Street and approve the make good budget identified in this report including the disposal of surplus furniture, fittings or chattels by the methods identified in this report.

<b>Workplace consolidation - status update June 2024 (Resolution)</b>		
For	Cr Rod Bruem, Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Michael Lyon, Cr Robert Mustow, Cr Sarah Ndiaye	6
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	Cr Big Rob	1
Absent	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

*Councillor Big Rob rejoined the meeting at 11:28am*

*General Manager and staff left the meeting at 11:30am*

13.2 Chair's minute - Annual Performance Review - General Manager

**RESOLVED [34/24]** (Mustow/Cadwallader) that Council:

1. Accept the recommendation of the Chair and Councillors that assessed the General Manager's annual review on 15 May 2024 as 'More than Satisfactory'.
2. Agree to the recommended change to the General Manager's total remuneration package (TRP) as specified in the report.

<b>Chair's minute - Annual Performance Review - General Manager (Resolution)</b>		
For	Cr Rod Bruem, Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Michael Lyon, Cr Robert Mustow, Cr Sarah Ndiaye and Cr Big Rob	7
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

### RESUME TO OPEN COUNCIL

**RESOLVED [35/24]** (Bruem/Ndiaye) that the meeting resume to Open Council.

### **CARRIED**

The meeting moved to Open Council at 11:32am

*General Manager and Group Manager Organisational Services rejoined the meeting at 11:32am*

The General Manager read to the meeting the following resolution of Council:

**RESOLVED [33/24]** (Gordon/Cadwallader) that Council:

1. Approve the sale methodology outlined in this report for the following properties:
  - (a) 131 Kyogle Street, South Lismore,
  - (b) 320 Wyrallah Road, Monaltrie, and
  - (c) 20 Conway Street, Lismore.
2. In relation to the sale of the above properties, for a period of 24 months from the date of this resolution:
  - (a) Authorise the General Manager to do and sign all things necessary to appoint a selling agent/s.
  - (b) Approve an annual advertising budget of \$15,000.
  - (c) Authorise the Chair and General Manager to sign the necessary documentation underseal to affect the sale/s in accordance with (1) above.
3. Endorse the exit strategy for 218-232 Molesworth Street and approve the make good budget identified in this report including the disposal of surplus furniture, fittings or chattels by the methods identified in this report.

The Chair read the resolution.

**RESOLVED [34/24]** (Mustow/Cadwallader) that Council:

3. Accept the recommendation of the Chair and Councillors that assessed the General Manager's annual review on 15 May 2024 as 'More than Satisfactory'.

4. Agree to the recommended change to the General Manager's total remuneration package (TRP) as specified in the report.

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**14 CLOSE OF BUSINESS**

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There being no further business the meeting closed at 11.35 am.

DRAFT

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**MINUTES OF ROUS COUNTY COUNCIL EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY, 17 JULY 2024 AT ADMINISTRATION OFFICE, 218-232 MOLESWORTH STREET, LISMORE**

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**1 OPENING OF MEETING**

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The Chair opened the meeting at 9.32 am.

In attendance:

Voting Committee:

- Cr Robert Mustow, Richmond Valley Council (Chair)
- Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Ballina Shire Council (Deputy Chair)
- Cr Rod Bruem, Ballina Shire Council
- Cr Michael Lyon, Byron Shire Council
- Cr Andrew Gordon, Lismore City Council
- Cr Big Rob, Lismore City Council
- Cr Sandra Humphrys, Richmond Valley Council

Rous County Council:

- Phillip Rudd, General Manager
- Helen McNeil, Group Manager Organisational Services
- Adam Nesbitt, Group Manager, Operations
- Geoff Ward, Group Manager, Transformation and Strategy
- Tania Burls, Acting Group Manager Planning and Delivery
- Michael McKenzie, Future Water Planning Manager
- Robyn Waldron, Secretary

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**2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

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*Council showed its respect and acknowledged the Traditional Custodians of the Land, of all Elders, on which this meeting took place.*

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**3 APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

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**RESOLVED [35/24]** (Bruem/Gordon) that Council accept Cr Sarah Ndiaye's apology for being unable to attend the Council Extraordinary meeting.

<b>Apologies and leave of absence (Resolution)</b>		
For	Cr Rod Bruem, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Sandra Humphrys, Cr Michael Lyon, Cr Robert Mustow and Cr Big Rob	6
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of interests	None	0
Absent	Cr Sharon Cadwallader	1
<b>Carried</b>		

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**4 DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

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Nil.

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**5 CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS**

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MOVED TO CLOSED COUNCIL

**RESOLVED [36/24]** (Humphrys/Gordon) that Council move into Closed Council with the press and public excluded from the meeting based on the grounds detailed below:

Report	Purchase of Marom Creek Water Treatment Plan
Grounds for closure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Section 10A(2)(d) commercial information of a confidential nature that would, if                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i). prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it, or</li> <li>ii). confer a commercial advantage on a competitor of the Council or,</li> <li>iii). reveal a trade secret, and</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. (g) matters affecting the security of the council, councillors, council staff or council property.</li> </ol>

**CARRIED**

The meeting moved to Closed Council at 9:34am.

*Cr Cadwallader joined meeting 9:35am*

5.1 Purchase of Marom Creek Water Treatment Plant

**RESOLVED [37/24]** (Gordon/Lyon)

1. That Council authorises the General Manager to:
  - (a) Do and sign all things necessary, including contracts, deeds and other necessary documentation, to secure the purchase and transfer of the land and assets set out in the body of this report from Ballina Shire Council, being:
    - (i) The Marom Creek Water Treatment Plant, land, water licences and water supply infrastructure assets, and ancillary network as described in this report and in Attachment 1, and
    - (ii) The Russellton Reservoir and land outlined in this report.
  - (b) In relation to (1)(a)(i) above, grant a caveatable interest in the Marom Creek Water Treatment Plant property to Ballina Shire Council, if requested, as security for payment by instalments of the purchase price.
2. That upon acquisition of the land identified in this report, it be classified as Operational Land for the purposes of ss25-27 of the *Local Government Act 1993*.
3. That the price for the land and asset transfer is to be as set out in this report.

4. That Council authorises the General Manager to enter into a Deed of Agreement with Ballina Shire Council which address the ongoing and future obligations of both parties.
5. That Council note the pending delegation from Ballina Shire Council required to operate the Marom Creek Water Treatment Plant and will consider and accept the delegation once made.

<b>Purchase of Marom Creek Water Treatment Plant (Resolution)</b>		
For	Cr Rod Bruem, Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Sandra Humphrys, Cr Michael Lyon, Cr Robert Mustow and Cr Big Rob	7
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

RESUME TO OPEN COUNCIL

**RESOLVED [38/24]** (Humphrys/Cadwallader) that the meeting resume to Open Council.

**CARRIED**

**Resolution –**

1. That Council authorises the General Manager to:
  - a. Do and sign all things necessary, including contracts, deeds and other necessary documentation, to secure the purchase and transfer of the land and assets set out in the body of this report from Ballina Shire Council, being:
    - i. The Marom Creek Water Treatment Plant, land, water licences and water supply infrastructure assets, and ancillary network as described in this report and in Attachment 1, and
    - ii. The Russellton Reservoir and land outlined in this report.
  - b. In relation to (1)(a)(i) above, grant a caveatable interest in the Marom Creek Water Treatment Plant property to Ballina Shire Council, if requested, as security for payment by instalments of the purchase price.
2. That upon acquisition of the land identified in this report, it be classified as Operational Land for the purposes of ss25-27 of the *Local Government Act 1993*.
3. That the price for the land and asset transfer is to be as set out in this report.
4. That Council authorises the General Manager to enter into a Deed of Agreement with Ballina Shire Council which address the ongoing and future obligations of both parties.
5. That Council note the pending delegation from Ballina Shire Council required to operate the Marom Creek Water Treatment Plant and will consider and accept the delegation once made.

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**6 CLOSE OF BUSINESS**

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There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.48am.



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**Chair's report: Committee performance review - 2023-2024**

PREPARED BY: LAURIE LEFCOURT

(Independent Member – Chair, Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee)

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**Recommendation**

That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Performance Review – period 2023-2024 be received and endorsed.

**Purpose**

To provide information in relation to the performance and role/activities of the Rous County Council Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee.

**Background**

The Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Charter provides that:

*The Chairperson of the Committee and General Manager will initiate a review of the performance of the Committee at least once every two years. The review will be conducted on a self-assessment basis (unless otherwise determined by the Chairperson of the Committee or Council), with appropriate input from management and any other relevant stakeholders, as determined by the Chairperson of the Committee.*

It has become practice over the past two years for a report on the Committee Performance Review to be prepared annually in order to ensure currency of information and to provide ongoing communication to the elected Council on the operations of the Committee.

In January 2024, the recent amendments to the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* were passed and came into effect on 1 July 2024. Of relevance, each council and joint organization must have a fully operational and independent ARIC comprising members that meet the requirements stipulated in the Act. This committee is responsible for reviewing the matters outlined in section 428A of the Local Government Act, ensuring comprehensive oversight of the council's risk management and internal audit functions. The previous committee under the guidance of Brian Wilkinson set the foundation for a compliant Audit Risk and Improvement Committee in both membership and in overseeing the appropriate matters as described by the Act.

**Governance**

The purpose, role and conduct of the Committee is guided by the Rous County Council Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Charter and Internal Audit Charter.

The Rous County Council Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Charter includes the following purpose for the Committee:

The role of the Committee is to report to Rous County Council and provide appropriate advice and recommendations on matters identified by this Charter. The Committee is independent and therefore operates independently of Council management.

During the period July 2023- June 2024 the Committee met five times. The voting Committee Members (Laurie Lefcourt, Andrew MacLeod and Raymond Wong and non-voting council representative, Councillor Big Rob ) have attended/participated in all meetings either in person or via remote technology. In that regard, the Committee acknowledges the efforts and arrangements made by Council staff to ensure meetings continued on schedule and contained information relevant to the role of the Committee.

The Committee's activities and governance processes have continued to be strongly supported by the Executive Team and staff at Rous County Council and the Committee has been satisfied with the quantity and quality of reporting provided to the Committee during this reporting period.

Given the scope of "items" the Committee is required to cover, a "Schedule of Reporting" has been utilised to guide the various meeting agendas, content and report timing throughout the year. A copy of the schedule is provided as part of each meeting agenda and has resulted in regular reporting on required items; in that regard the Committee was pleased with the content and presentation of reports. It was also appreciated that there was consistent attendance and involvement of staff at Committee Meetings. This schedule of reporting is being updated for the 2024-2025 financial year to align with the introduction of the new legislation which became effective on 1 July 2024.

The Internal and External Audit Programs of Council have had appropriate reporting and links to the Committee role and meeting agendas. The current Committee Charter has been updated to reflect the transition to the guidelines released via the Office of Local Government and this along with the Internal Audit Charter have been appropriate and supportive of the Committee role.

The following comments represent the Committees views in relation the areas of Council's operations that the Committee has a legislative duty to keep under review:

### 1. Compliance

Information and reporting has been provided to the Committee in respect of Compliance Monitoring and Reporting including policy reviews and information relating to Section 355 Committees (particularly in regard to the volunteer floodgate operator program).

### 2. Risk management

Regular reporting has been provided on Enterprise Risk Management; this has included information on the Risk Register and Risk Management Framework. Whilst the finalisation of a fully operative risk management framework is still to be completed, much progress was made during the year with the engagement of a risk specialist onto the management team, and it is expected that the framework, including a fully functional risk register will be presented to council in the near future although this will continue to be a living document and will be amended with new and emerging risks as and when they arise

### 3. Fraud control

During the year, the Committee received a report on Fraud Control and Corruption with appropriate steps to continue to improve the program awareness and processes across the Council.

### 4. Financial management

During the year the Committee has received reports and presentations relating to the Financial Management processes of Council. The External Auditors have engaged closely with the Committee in respect to annual financial statements, Management Letters and the Annual Audit Engagement Plan. In addition, the Committee has been kept informed via agenda items on budget preparation, quarterly budget reviews, and investment processes. As part of the External Audit Management Letters, there are recommended actions to improve Council's approach to various processes. The implementation of those actions is kept under review by the Committee.

### 5. Governance

As with all local government organisations, the Governance processes at Rous County Council are diverse and are subject to ongoing action. The Committee has received regular reports and information on governance practices and improvements, including: Policy, Procedure and delegation reviews/ Internal Audit Reports and Actions/Section 355 Committees/Code of Conduct statistics/ Code of Meeting Practice and the progress of the ICT Business Plan including the Digital Transformation Strategy. During the 2023-24 financial year the Committee

received reports and monitored progress on the audit of the Dam Safety Management System, the Audit of Council's Records Management System and regular updates on the actions from other previous internal audits and organisational reviews.

### 6. Implementation of the strategic plan, delivery program and strategies

An integral part of Local Government operations is the Strategic Planning processes and the actions taken to implement strategies. The Implementation of the Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and Strategies at Rous County Council is supported by comprehensive and understandable documentation. The Committee has received reports and presentations relating to those processes e.g. the IPR Framework, progression of the Delivery and Operational Plans. The Committee received updates on actions taken in regards to flood mitigation actions arising from an internal review.

The committee is also kept abreast of a number of areas that are integral to the delivery of the strategic plan including:

- Work Health and Safety and trends, Health and Safety Environment updates, Work Health and Safety updates and information relating to emergency responses and business continuity planning.
- ICT Updates and Digital Transformation planning.

### 7. Collection of performance measurement by Council

The collection of performance management data by Council has been reported to the Committee (and the community) via the Annual Report and the Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and Operational Plan processes. The Annual Report provided information on Council's performance in delivering actions outlined in the IPR Framework.

### 8. Any other matters prescribed by regulations made under the Local Government Act 1993

In addition to the above, the Committee has been kept informed of Other Matters relevant to the role of ARIC and Council's operations. This has included Reports and Publications from the Independent Commission Against Corruption, Information and Privacy Commission of NSW, Performance Audits and Local Government Reports from The Audit Office of NSW. The Committee has been kept aware of developments in relation to the Audit Risk and Improvement guidelines and has worked closely with Council to implement the changes.

### 9. Internal Audit Program

The Internal Audit Program of Council is undertaken via a third party and is monitored closely by the Committee; in that respect the Committee has had input to the annual audit plan (based around identified risks of the Council and the Local Government industry), receives and considers reports from the internal auditor and also monitors progress made on recommendations in Internal Audit Reports. The scope of the Internal Audit Program can reach across the various operations of Council i.e. Compliance, Governance, Financial Management, Fraud Control, Risk management and Strategic Planning. The Internal Audit Program of Council is considered appropriate at this time; however, it should be noted that going forward there will be pressures via the new Guidelines and ARIC responsibilities that will likely require **increased** internal audit resources/ funding.

During the year, the Committee received and noted the results of one internal audit on the Information Management Systems of Council.

The Committee notes that both the External Audit coverage and Internal Audit Program have included items relating to ICT issues i.e. Cyber Security, ICT processes and controls, etc. Accordingly, the ongoing need for strong ICT processes and planning will continue to be a focus of the Committee. The reporting provided to the Committee on ICT related matters in the year subject of this report has been appropriate and informative.

The scope of the Committee activities identified in this Report supports the view that the Committee is undertaking its required functions in an appropriate manner.

As part of the preparation of this Performance Report consideration has been given to the content of the Charters that guide the role of the Committee. As Chairperson, I have been unable to identify any specific 'failings' of the Committee to meet their obligations and responsibilities. In addition, it is considered that there are no specific matters that need to be brought to the attention of the elected Council.

### **Financial**

The Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee functions and associated actions are funded from existing budget and resource allocations.

### **Consultation**

In providing this report for Committee consideration, the opportunity was provided to Committee Members to review the draft Committee performance review and provide feedback and/or suggested amendments. In addition, the General Manager and staff were also requested to provide comments as part of the process of reporting the review to the Committee.

### **Conclusion**

As Chairperson of the Rous County Council Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee I consider that, as outlined above, the Committee has satisfactorily and appropriately undertaken and performed its role during the 2023-2024 period.

Laurie Lefcourt  
Chair

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## Preliminary 2023/24 End of Financial Year Summary and Budget Carry Forwards

*Responsible Officer: Group Manager Organisational Services (Helen McNeil)*

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### Recommendation

That Council:

1. Receive and note the Preliminary 2023/24 End of Year Financial Summary Report, acknowledging that it is a preliminary summary prior to end of year adjustments and audit.
2. Approve the funds to be carried forward as detailed in Tables 2 - 5 of this report.

### Background

This report provides a preliminary overview of the 2023/24 financial performance of the organisation and identifies the works to be carried forward to the 2024/25 financial year.

While the figures and commentary will provide a guide to performance, it is important to note that it is subject to change as end of year accounting adjustments are in progress and the audit has not yet commenced.

The carryovers for 2024/25 are significant in value and represent the scope of works planned in the Long-Term Financial Plan. The impact of these budget changes is currently being addressed by staff and will lead to revisions in the Quarterly Budget Review Statement for the period ending 30 September 2024. It should be noted that large, multi-year projects such as the Future Water Program, Gallans Road Precinct and Smart Metering and Backflow have had a significant impact on the carryovers proposed and that most of the changes relate to timing issues rather than overall changes.

### End of Year Financial Summary

The End of Year financial summary is presented for the organisation. Actual income and expenditure are compared to the budget estimates as at Quarterly Budget Review Statement for the quarter ending 31 March 2024.

### Whole Organisation

Table 1 shows income and expense for Council. It highlights those preliminary results have generally been better than anticipated with an operating surplus of \$2,468,544.

**Table 1: Whole Organisation Preliminary Financial Results for 2023/24**

	2023/24 Actual \$	2023/24 Estimated March Review \$	Variance \$
Operating Income	32,654,703	31,831,900	822,803
Capital Income	4,381,893	7,668,600	-3,286,707
Operating Expense	36,155,052	39,844,500	-3,689,448
<b>Operating Result (Deficit)</b>	<b>881,544</b>	<b>-344,000</b>	<b>1,225,544</b>
Eliminate Depreciation	8,182,325	8,305,100	-122,775
<b>Cash Result</b>	<b>9,063,869</b>	<b>7,961,100</b>	<b>1,102,769</b>
Loan Capital Repayment	3,825,355	3,825,400	45
Capital Expense	10,803,499	20,265,300	9,461,801
Transfer to/(from) Reserve	-5,564,985	-16,129,600	10,564,615
<b>Net Cash Movement</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Reserve Balance</b>	<b>34,210,667</b>	<b>21,642,000</b>	<b>12,568,667</b>

### Major Movements in Overall Results

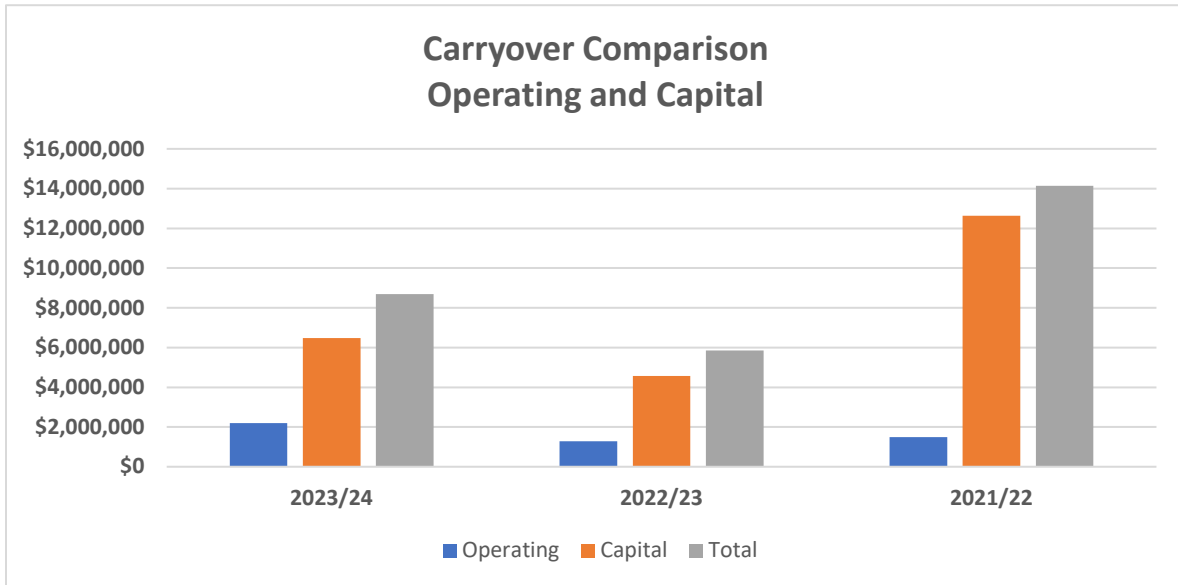
- Operating Income – a favourable result due predominantly to increased interest revenue.
- Capital Income – an unfavourable result due to a significant reduction in Section 64 contributions received from Constituent Councils and capital grant funding.
- Operating Expense – a favourable result due to lower-than-expected electricity costs and unspent contractor and consultant funds. This will impact the 2024/25 budget with several requests for these budgets to be carried over.
- Depreciation – a favourable result. This is a minor variance and is due to the difficult nature of accurately predicting depreciation.
- Capital Expenditure – a favourable result due to the timing of spending of major projects. Again, this will impact the 2024/25 budget with several requests for these budgets to be carried over.
- Cash Reserves – a favourable result due to reduced operating expenditure and unspent capital works program funds.

### Works Carried Forward

This section of the report identifies those unexpended budgets that are largely committed and need to be rolled forward to the 2024/25 financial year. The projects to which the budget relate are either not complete or in some cases not commenced. The works have been split between operational projects and capital works.

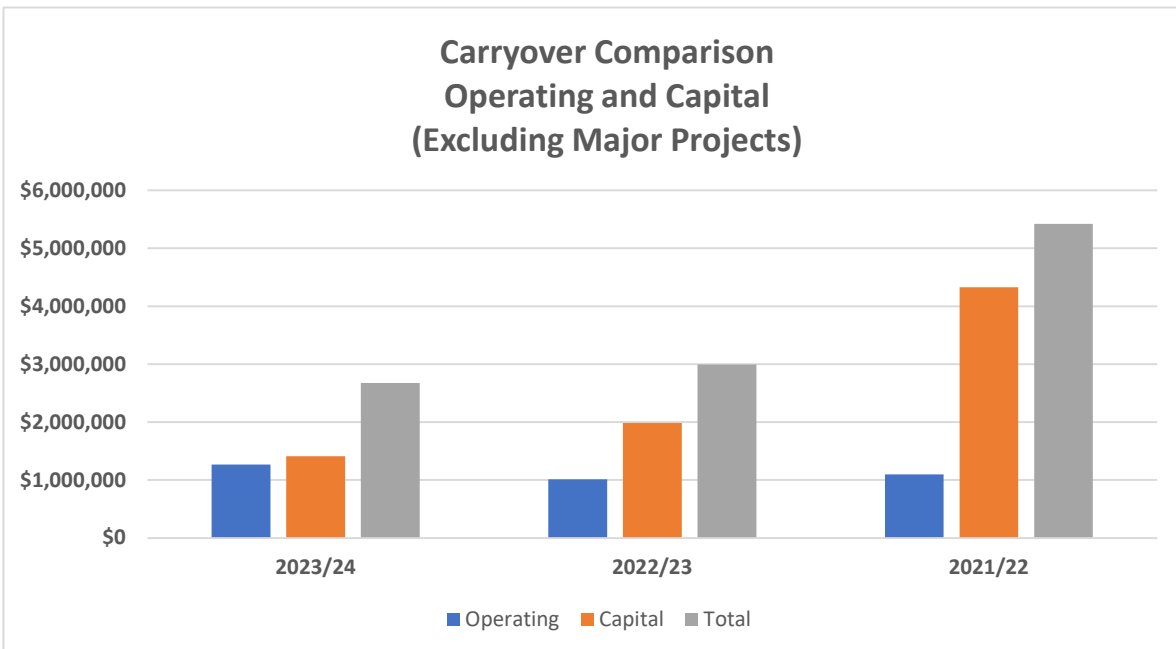
The proposed carryovers from 2023/24 total \$8,686,000. Table 2 compares previous carryover values; 2023/34 carryovers are an increase on the previous year; 2022/23 totalled \$5,853,500. The carryovers are less than 2021/22, at \$14,135,000, this year was particularly high due to the flood event.

**Table 2: Carryover Comparison – Operating and Capital**



These carryovers predominantly relate to the Bulk Water Reporting Unit (77.2%) and the Retail Water Reporting Unit (15.5%). It is important to note that the carryover amounts are significantly impacted by major projects including the Future Water Program 2060 (FWP 2060), Gallans Road Precinct, Smart Metering/Backflow, Digital Transformation and Perradenya. When these projects (and some other major projects from prior years) are removed the carryovers total; 2023/24 \$2,676,300, 2022/23 \$2,995,500 and 2021/22 \$5,422,900. This is displayed in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Carryover Comparison – Operating and Capital (Not Including Major Projects)**



The following key is provided for reference to Tables 4 and 5 below.

<b>Status</b>	<b>Description</b>
Committed	Purchase orders have been opened or contracts signed for these projects, however they are yet to begin.
Intentionally deferred	These projects have been deliberately deferred for a variety of reasons.
Underway	These projects have commenced but are not yet completed.
Statutory requirement	These projects relate to legislative requirements that Council is required to complete.
Grant restricted	These projects are funded through grant revenue and are required to complete the projects to satisfy the funding body requirements.



**Table 4: Operating Budgets to be Carried Forward**

Operating Project Name	Total (\$) 2024/2025	Status	Comments
Enterprise Risk Management (S-ADMIN)	60,000	Committed	The consultant phase of the Enterprise Risk Management program was delayed slightly in order to coordinate with the Transformation and Strategy team, which will be involved in integrating the program into the strategic process roadmap. A vendor has been chosen and it is now expected that the implementation of the chosen software will take place between August and December 2024.
Branding and Marketing (S-ADMIN)	110,000	Intentionally deferred	Several branding and marketing projects have been identified to be better aligned with the timing of Council's relocation to Ballina and are now scheduled for later in 2024 and early 2025.
Health and Wellbeing (P-HEALTH & WELLBEING)	9,800	Underway	This program to support staff health and wellbeing was delayed in the 2023/24 financial year in order to provide the best structure and access for staff engagement. We have now developed the best approach, and the proposal has been adopted by the Health & Safety Committee and further endorsed by the Group Manager.
Hardcopy Record Storage (P-HARDCOPY STORAGE)	35,000	Underway	This budget was used for the digitisation of our hardcopy records. The remaining budget is to be used for the storage of the remaining hardcopy records at an external storage site. This is due to the lack of a suitable climate-controlled storage location available post-relocation from the Molesworth Street office to the Kyogle Street depot.
Dam Safety Management System (P-DSMS)	491,300	Statutory requirement	This is a multi-year project with most of the unspent funds already committed under the contract and the remaining \$37,000 of uncommitted funds required as a contingency to complete the current project.
ECWTP Strategic Review (P-ECWTP STRATEGIC)	38,800	Committed	This is a multi-year project due for completion in the 2024/25 financial year with the unspent funds already committed under the contract.

Operating Project Name	Total (\$) 2024/2025	Status	Comments
Grant Funding Wilsons River Tidal Pool Coastal & Estuary Riparian Works (GC-WILSONS RIVER TP)	27,900	Grant restricted	RCC successfully secured DCCEEW Coastal and Estuary grant funding for riparian works at the Wilsons River tidal pool at Woodlawn, consisting of weed control and bush regeneration over a total of 500m of riverbank and 1ha of riparian land. A contractor has been engaged and the funds have been committed. However, the work is yet to commence, and the funds are required to be carried forward to allow this work to be completed in the 2024/25 financial year.
Review of RCC development control guidance - drinking water catchments (P-CMP)	17,300	Committed	This project involves preparing a detailed specification, with constituent engagement, for Actions A2 and A3 of the RCC Catchment Management Plan, which are to be carried out in the 2024/25 financial year. Work on the specification commenced in the 2023/24 financial year and unspent funds are committed to completing this specification during the first half of the 2024/25 financial year and the preparation of technical briefs for Actions A2 and A3 to be completed in the second half of the 2024/25 financial year.
Catchment Landholder Education (P-CMP 20-25 A1)	3,300	Committed	Action A1 of the RCC Catchment Management Plan involves on-going promotion, education and awareness building concerning the impact of catchment activities on drinking water quality and the role of all catchment stakeholders in protecting catchments. Unspent funds from the 2023/24 financial year have been committed on the engagement of a videographer to capture footage and provide community education input regarding RCC's River Reach Program.
Improve the condition of Emigrant Creek riparian buffer zones and adjacent lands for greater buffering and protection of drinking water sources (P-CMP 20-25 EC20)	22,900	Committed	As part of this multi-year project, Rous, in partnership with landholders, has prepared the Emigrant Creek River Reach Plan and associated Property Site Action Plans. During the 2023/24 financial year, extensive work has commenced on the implementation of these plans. Unfortunately, there have been some delays due to the extended run of wet weather (which is not conducive to herbicide-based weed eradication) and the limited availability of bush regeneration contractors. Accordingly, there is some carry forward of this committed work required to the 2024/25 financial year.

Operating Project Name	Total (\$) 2024/2025	Status	Comments
Improve the condition of Wilsons River riparian buffer zones and adjacent lands for greater buffering and protection of drinking water sources (P-CMP 20-25 WR16)	57,700	Committed	As part of this multi-year project, Rous, in partnership with landholders, has prepared the Wilsons River Reach Plan and associated Property Site Action Plans. During the 2023/24 financial year, extensive work has commenced on the implementation of these plans. Unfortunately, there have been some delays due to the extended run of wet weather (which is not conducive to herbicide-based weed eradication) and the limited availability of bush regeneration contractors. Accordingly, there is some carry forward of this committed work required to the 2024/25 financial year.
Reconciliation Action Plan (P-RAP)	17,100	Committed	There are a number of existing contracts under the Reconciliation Action Plan that are nearing completion, including completion of the cultural awareness training program and a related videography project. Unspent funds from the 2023/24 budget are required to be carried forward to the 2024/25 financial year to allow completion of these committed projects.
Cultural Education Information Centre (S-CEIC)	19,500	Committed	Under the Rous Cultural Environmental and Information Centre project, as redesigned following the closure of the centre after the 2022 floods, Rous engaged a contractor during the 2023/24 financial year to undertake various activities to support redesign of our engagement activities associated with the RAP. These activities are partially complete, and the unspent funds are committed to completing this work in the 2024/25 financial year.
Leadership and Culture (P-LEADERSHIP & CULTURE)	70,000	Intentionally deferred	A dedicated Leadership & culture budget had been approved to support initiatives identified in the Operational Plan and Council's aim to become an employer of choice. It is now recommended that this scope of work be aligned with the relocation to Gallans Road, requiring that the budget be carried forward to the 2025/26 financial year.
Demand Management Behaviour Change Pilot Program (P-DM RES1)	8,600	Underway	The implementation of this program was delayed due to the difficulty in finding a consultant to conduct the research. Rous staff have decided to lead the program internally (with assistance from external sources as needed) and the unspent funds from the 2023/24 financial year are required to be carried forward and used with the existing budget for the 2024/25 financial year to implement the program.

Operating Project Name	Total (\$) 2024/2025	Status	Comments
Future Water Program - Demand Forecasting & Secure Yield Assessment (P-FWP2060)	108,400	Committed	This project started later than anticipated due to a delay obtaining core data from the Department, which was required for the consultant's model. The unspent funds from the 2023/24 financial year are committed for additional modelling work which has been commissioned from the consultants.
Future Water Program - Dunoon Dam Investigations (P-FWP2060 DDI)	468,700	Committed	This project has been delayed by difficulties in obtaining access to the site. Therefore, the project timeline has been extended, with completion now expected in the 2025/26 financial year. All unspent funds are committed for track access work and consultants' assessments.
Future Water Program - Emergency Desalination Investigations (P-FWP2060 EDI)	31,100	Committed	This project is complete, and a final report has been delivered to Council. However, the completion date was slightly later than expected and some of the unspent funds are required to be carried forward to cover the final invoice from the consultant, which is expected to be received in August 2024.
Future Water Program - Purified Recycled Water Investigations (P-FWP2060 IPR)	104,700	Committed	This project is complete, and a final report has been delivered to Council. However, the completion date was slightly later than expected and some of the unspent funds are required to be carried forward to cover the final invoice from the consultant, which is expected to be received in August 2024.
Future Water Program - Richmond Area Coastal Floodplain Alluvial Groundwater Scheme (P-FWP2060 RACFAGS)	183,100	Committed	This project started later than anticipated due to the capacity of internal personnel at the time. Then the literature review highlighted the lack of specific information on the groundwater source parameters. The groundwater source report recommended an alternative approach be undertaken to obtain further source parameters by testing existing groundwater bores in the key areas of interest. The unspent funds from the 2023/24 financial year are committed to completing this work.

Operating Project Name	Total (\$) 2024/2025	Status	Comments
Future Water Program - RCD Dead Storage Investigation (P-FWP2060 RCD DSI)	8,700	Committed	The initial hydraulic assessment for which we have received Safe and Secure Water grant funding has been fully completed and grant funds received. However, additional engineering assessments have been commissioned to enable an effective implementation of the scheme. Therefore, the unspent funds from the 2023/24 financial year are required to be carried forward to cover this cost.
Future Water Program - Wilsons River Emergency Supply Studies (P-FWP2060 WR ESS)	29,200	Committed	This is a multi-year project with most of the work scheduled and budgeted to take place in the 2024/25 financial year. The unspent funds from the 2023/24 financial year are fully committed to the consultants who are working on this ongoing project.
Coastal Management Plan Scoping Study Stage 2-4 (GC-CMP STUDY 2-4)	34,500	Grant restricted	RCC (on behalf of its constituent councils) is coordinating the development of the Richmond River Coastal Management Program (CMP) to set the long-term strategy for the coordinated management of the coastal zone with a focus on achieving the objects of the Coastal Management Act 2016 and associated catchment-wide objectives. RCC has received approval for a Coast and Estuaries Grant from the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water. The unspent funds from the 2023/24 financial year, along with the contributions received from the constituent councils, will be used to provide the matching funds required by the funding agreement. The project is currently advertised via an open tender process in Tenderlink, with a contractor expected to be engaged early in the 2024/25 financial year.
Grant Funding East Coraki Coastal & Estuary Riparian Works (GC-COASTAL & ESTUARY)	60,500	Grant restricted	RCC successfully secured Coastal and Estuary grant funding from the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) for riparian works at East Coraki, consisting of weed control and bush regeneration over a total of 1km of riverbank and regeneration of 2.2ha of riparian land. A contractor has been engaged and the work has commenced. The unspent funds are committed under the contract and required to complete the project and meet our commitments under the funding agreement.

Operating Project Name	Total (\$) 2024/2025	Status	Comments
Grant Funding Fish Habitat Action (Coraki Riparian Project) (GC-FISH HABITAT)	16,900	Grant restricted	RCC successfully secured DPI Fish Habitat Action grant funding for riparian works at Coraki, consisting of weed control and bush regeneration over a total of 1.3km of riverbank and the planting of 2,500 trees. A contractor has been engaged and the majority of the works completed. The unspent funds are partially committed under the contract to enable to contractor to complete these works and the balance in required for the installation of signage.
South and East Lismore Town Drains - Northern Rivers Recovery and Resilience Program (GC-S&E LISM DRAINS)	31,500	Grant restricted	This project, which spans the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years, started later than planned due to a delay in receiving the signed funding deeds. This has meant that spending budgeted for the 2023/24 financial year didn't occur as planned. However, the project is due for completion in December 2024.
Coraki and Woodburn Town Drains - Northern Rivers Recovery and Resilience Program (GC-COR & WB DRAINS)	11,200	Grant restricted	This project, which spans the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years, started later than planned due to a delay in receiving the signed funding deeds. A contractor has been engaged and initial works have commenced but not all of the spending budgeted for the 2023/24 financial year occurred as planned. The unspent funds are required to be carried forward to the 2024/25 financial year, with the project due for completion in December 2024.
Flood Mitigation Strategic Review (GC-PACL STRATEGIC FL)	123,700	Grant restricted	Work is progressing on this project, with unspent funds committed to consultants, who are expected to complete their work by December 2024.
<b>Total Operating Budget to be Carried Forward</b>	<b>2,201,400</b>		

**Table 5: Capital Budgets to be Carried Forward**

Capital Project Name	Total (\$) 2024/2025	Status	Comments
Gallans Road - Workplace Consolidation (CE-GALLANS)	2,576,100	Underway	The project has yet to commence construction (estimated 1 September 2024 subject to receiving DA approval from Ballina Shire Council). It is proposed to carry forward all unspent allocated funding from the 2023/24 financial year to the 2025/26 financial year, as the delay in obtaining DA approval will push back this multiyear project.
Change Management (CE-CHANGE MANAGEMENT)	56,700	Underway	Unspent funds from the 2023/24 financial year are committed for recruitment fees for contract staff recently employed, along with other project costs which will be incurred as the project will last longer than originally planned due to expected delays with the workplace consolidation project. It is expected that this budget will be transferred to operating expenditure in the September 2024 QBRS.
Digital Transformation (CE-IT DIGITAL TRANSF)	297,300	Underway	These funds are committed for the Novus project blueprint stage, which has been delayed, and will now be complete by the end of August 2024. It is expected that this budget will be transferred to operating expenditure in the September 2024 QBRS.
Digital Transformation - Payroll (CE-IT DT PAYROLL)	43,400	Underway	This project is underway, although implementation of the new payroll system has been delayed from June 2024 to September 2024. These funds are committed for the final implementation cost. It is expected that this budget will be moved to operating expenditure in the September 2024 QBRS.
Intranet (CE-IT INTRANET)	50,000	Underway	Phase 2 of the intranet project includes bringing online additional Powell Intranet Modules and the consulting hours to implement this. This includes the development of specific lines of business sites within the Powell Intranet product, integration with current the intranet site and ongoing enhancements and support. The intranet is the main channel for all staff communications and alerts and, therefore, improvements are vital for the uptake and effectiveness of the platform. The intranet is slated to be leveraged by a growing proportion of the business. It is expected that this budget will be transferred to operating expenditure in the September 2024 QBRS.

Capital Project Name	Total (\$) 2024/2025	Status	Comments
NCWTP Wastewater (CE-NCWP WASTE)	15,100	Committed	These unspent funds are required to install 5 flowmeters in the waste plant at Nightcap Water Treatment Plant. This has been delayed until the 2024/25 financial year due to a lack of available labour.
Installation of a Solar PV system on the roof of the water reservoir next to the Nightcap WTP as part of the Renewable Energy and Emissions Reduction Plan (CE-REERP NCWTP RWP)	135,000	Intentionally deferred	The planned commencement of this multi-year project has been delayed as the plans are being reviewed due to the possibility for efficiencies and integration with the chemical storage facility proposed for Nightcap Water Treatment Plant and also the need for a review of the structural capacity of the roof of the clear water tank to take the load of the proposed solar panels. Once, these reviews are complete, it is expected that the project will commence later in the 2024/25 financial year and continue in the 2025/26 financial year.
Water Loss Implementation (CE-FWP WLI)	324,400	Committed	This is a multi-year program of on-ground actions to reduce water loss being undertaken by Council under the Future Water Program. Unspent funds from the 2023/24 financial year are partially committed to existing contracts for bulk meters, pipeline acoustic leak inspections and flow control/pressure control equipment for network calming. The remaining funds will be required to undertake installation of the bulk meters which is currently out for public tender.
Evans 375 Landslip Repair (CE-NRFWSP CORAKI)	15,500	Grant restricted	NSW Public Works are managing the remediation of the Evans 375 pipeline which was compromised by landslip in the February 2022 flood event. RCC is carrying out some additional work which was not part of the main contract. Unspent funds from the 2023/24 financial year are required to be carried forward to the 2024/25 financial year to complete this work.
Flood Recovery - WRS Low Lift Pump Station (CE-NRFWSP WRS)	176,800	Grant restricted	This project is almost complete, with unspent funds from the 2023/24 financial year required to be carried forward to the 2024/25 financial year to cover the replacement of the vertical ladder and Rous' contribution to the modification of the platform.



Capital Project Name	Total (\$) 2024/2025	Status	Comments
Flood Recovery - Woodburn (CE-NRFWSP WOODBURN)	155,000	Grant restricted	This project, to demolish a flood-damaged water tank and replace pipework is being carried out in conjunction with Public Works funded flood repair work on key water assets at the Woodburn Groundwater Treatment Plant Site, for which a contract has been signed and all funds committed.
NCWTP main switchboard and PLC network replacement and saturator works (CE-NCWTP PLC SB SAT)	131,300	Underway	The unspent funds from the 2023/24 financial year are required to be carried forward to the 2024/25 financial year to cover committed expenses to the contractors to complete this project.
Future Water Program - Alstonville Groundwater (CE-FWP ALSTON)	139,300	Committed	This is a multi-year project, with all unspent funds from the 2023/24 financial year fully committed to the relevant consultants and contractors undertaking this ongoing work.
Future Water Program - Groundwater Land Acquisition (CE-FWP LAND)	114,100	Committed	Residual funds from the 2023/24 financial year are fully committed to the land purchase which settled after the end of the financial year. This land is part of the Woodburn groundwater scheme and contains at least one of the identified bore sites.
Future Water Program - Tyagarah Groundwater (CE-FWP TYAG)	226,800	Committed	This is a multi-year project, with all unspent funds from the 2023/24 financial year fully committed to the relevant consultants and contractors undertaking this ongoing work.
Future Water Program - Woodburn Bores (CE-FWP WNB)	180,000	Committed	This is a multi-year project, with all unspent funds from the 2023/24 financial year fully committed to the relevant consultants and contractors undertaking this ongoing work.

Capital Project Name	Total (\$) 2024/2025	Status	Comments
Wilsons River Watermain Crossing at Bexhill (CE-WREC-BH-REALIGN)	149,400	Grant restricted	This multi-year project, for the burial of an elevated water main crossing of the Wilsons River, is funded by the State government under the Infrastructure Betterment Fund. Drilling for the Geotech investigation was delayed due to persistent wet weather but is now complete, with the balance of the funds budgeted for the 2024/25 financial year committed for the design stage which is currently underway.
Smart Metering and Backflow Project (CE-SM & BACKFLOW)	1,189,300	Underway	On ground works have been extended into the 2024/25 financial year as a result of wet weather during 2024. Unspent funds are committed in the contract, with completion of on-ground works expected early in the 2024/25 financial year. Other expenditure for post-construction activities will also occur during the 2024/25 financial year.
North Lismore Water Filling Station (CE-FILLING STATION)	9,400	Underway	This project, to install a new bulk water filling station in North Lismore, is currently under construction. Unspent funds from the 2023/24 financial year are required to be carried forward to undertake the remaining works using internal labour.
Reticulation Renewals - Arthur Road (CE-RETIC AR)	51,900	Underway	This project is almost complete, with unspent funds required to be carried forward to cover retention held and any contingency amounts.
Reticulation Renewals - Grace Road (CE-RETIC GRACE)	89,900	Underway	This project is almost complete, with unspent funds required to be carried forward to cover retention held and any contingency amounts.
Reticulation Renewals - Richmond Hill (CE-RETIC RH)	9,600	Underway	This project is almost complete, with unspent funds required to be carried forward to cover retention held and any contingency amounts.
Repair of Saltwater Creek Levee (CE-FMI LI HM)	22,000	Committed	RCC has engaged a contractor (and a purchase order has been issued) to repair Saltwater Creek Levee. The work was planned for May 2024 but has been delayed due to wet weather.

Capital Project Name	Total (\$) 2024/2025	Status	Comments
Perradenya (CE-PERRA DA CON)	309,500	Underway	This project is progressing as expected with the final submission to be lodged by October/November 2024.
Rural Properties (CE-RURAL PROP)	16,800	Committed	These funds are committed to repair gates and fencing for rural agistment at Frasers Road.
<b>Total Capital Budget to be Carried Forward</b>	<b>6,484,600</b>		

## **Governance**

- **Finance**

All approved carryover requests will be added to Council's Long-Term Financial Plan.

- **Legal**

In accordance with section [211](#) of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* (NSW), money cannot be expended unless Council has first approved the expenditure and the budget. Council approval is therefore sought for the proposed carryover works.

## **Consultation**

The carryover information contained in this report was obtained through submissions from staff across the organisation.

## **Conclusion**

The Preliminary 2023/24 End of Financial Year Summary report has been prepared to indicate the financial results, subject to any further adjustments and the resulting proposed carryover works are included. It is recommended that Council approve the preliminary financial results and carryovers.

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## Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee - meeting update

*Responsible Officer: Group Manager Organisational Services (Helen McNeil)*

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### Recommendation

That Council:

1. Receive and note the:
  - (a) Attached minutes from the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee meeting of 22 July 2024, and
  - (b) Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee performance report for the period 2023-2024.
2. Revoke the Internal Audit Charter dated 23 November 2020, and any charter revived as a result, and approve the revised Internal Audit Charter attached to this report.

### Background

The Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee ('Committee') met on 22 July 2024. A copy of the minutes of the meetings are attached ([Attachment 1](#)).

### Key Messages

#### 1. Chair's report – Committee Performance Review 2023-2024

The 2023-2024 Committee Performance Report was endorsed by the Committee and is presented to Council at this meeting by the Committee Chair – see [Attachment 2](#).

#### 2. Financial Management

The Committee received and noted the information presented in the Financial Management report regarding:

- The final 2024/25 Operational plan and Budget adopted at Council's June 2024 meeting applicable for 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.
- NSW Audit Office – Interim Audit – Management Letter.
- The presentation format of the draft Financial Statements (to 31 May 2024) for year ending 30 June 2024.
- Revaluation of land and building infrastructure.
- The Investment report furnished to Council's June 2024 meeting applicable for the month of May 2024.

#### 3. Risk and compliance

An overview of the progress of the Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) review and the Fraud Control Improvement Program was provided to the Committee.

Reporting on the General Manager's top 'High' rated risks (listed below), and associated controls, was also provided for consideration and periodic oversight by the Committee:

1. Lone/Isolated work
2. Cyber Security
3. Supply Chain issues
4. Fatigue/Burn out
5. Attraction/Retention of specialist staff

#### 4. Health Safety and Environment

The Committee received its regular performance and insights snapshot relating to health and safety matters, such as injury and incident numbers/types/trends, for the period May – June 2024.

An overview of the following programs and legislative changes were also provided to the Committee for its consideration and awareness:

- **Lone/remote isolated worker management** – the implementation of 2-up staffing arrangements and mandatory welfare check-ins/check-outs are in the process of being documented within a corporate procedure and education materials developed for the implementation of these new arrangements.
- **Workplace psychosocial risk management** – in conjunction with its workers compensation insurer (StateCover), a program to support the management of psychosocial risks within Council's workplace is being developed to ensure Council is in a position to satisfy its obligations under the changes to the *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017*.
- **New Industrial Manslaughter Laws** - On 20 June 2024 the NSW Parliament passed legislative changes to the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* creating an offence of industrial manslaughter. The implementation of these laws is expected to set a higher standard of accountability in workplace safety practices across NSW.

#### 5. Audit

The Committee received its regular update on staff progress implementing improvement recommendations arising from internal and in-house service audits across the practice areas of ICT, safety, procurement, and emergency management.

Further to the presentation of the draft internal audit report on records management provided to the 30 April 2024 Committee meeting, a copy of the final report including management responses was provided to the Committee.

In relation to the interim financial audit, only one (1) partial prior year management issue/matter related to the accessibility and review frequency of IT policies and procedures was identified. No new management issues were identified by the NSW Audit Office.

#### 6. Internal Audit Charter

The Committee endorsed the submission of the revised Internal Audit Charter ([Attachment 3](#)) to the governing body for approval.

The Model Internal Audit Charter published by the Office of Local Government forms the basis of the revised document with some modest inclusions to make it suitable for Council. The revised document is consistent with the Guidelines and applicable legislative and regulatory requirements recently introduced as part of the new [Guidelines for Risk Management and Internal Audit](#) (Guidelines).

The revised Internal Audit Charter is intended to replace the existing document dated 23 November 2020 ([Attachment 4](#)) adopted prior to the development and introduction of the new Guidelines.

The Committee noted its preference that only one (1) position within the existing organisation structure be designated as the Internal Audit Coordinator referred to in the revised Internal Audit Charter. The General Manager will have regard to this when making the said designation should Council approve the revised document.

## 7. Dam Safety

The Committee received a further progress update on the implementation of the outstanding actions (9 non-compliances and 11 improvement recommendations) identified in the audit report issued by Dam Safety NSW on 7 June 2023. As at the date of this update to the Committee, only 3 non-compliance and 1 recommendation remained to be addressed. These matters are expected to be resolved by December 2024 and have been assessed as minor in nature by Council staff.

### Attachments

1. Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee meeting minutes 22 July 2024
2. 2023-2024 Committee Performance Report – see Agenda Item 10.1
3. Revised Internal Audit Charter (for **approval**)
4. Internal Audit Charter dated 23 November 2020 (for **revocation**)

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**MINUTES OF ROUS COUNTY COUNCIL AUDIT RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE HELD MONDAY, 22 JULY 2024 AT ADMINISTRATION OFFICE, 218-232 MOLESWORTH STREET, LISMORE**

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**1 OPENING OF MEETING**

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The Chair opened the meeting at 10.00 am.

In attendance:

Voting Committee

- Laurie Lefcourt (Chair) (via 'Teams')
- Andrew MacLeod, Independent member
- Raymond Wong, Independent member (via 'Teams')

Non-Voting Committee

- Cr Big Rob, Rous Councillor

Rous County Council

- Helen McNeil, Group Manager Organisational Services
- Jonathan Patino, Finance Manager
- Lauren Edwards, Governance and Risk Manager
- Robyn Waldron, Secretary

Other attendees

- Ben Rogers, Thomas Noble & Russell (via 'Teams')
- Dane Parsons, InConsult (via 'Teams')

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**2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

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*Council showed its respect and acknowledged the Traditional Custodians of the Land, of Elders past and present, on which this meeting took place.*

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**3 APOLOGIES**

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- Phillip Rudd, General Manager
- Quentin Wong, Audit Office of NSW
- Richard Watkinson, Thomas Noble & Russell



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**4 CONFIRMATION MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

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Copy of Minutes of the meeting held 30 April 2024 were provided for information.

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**5 DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

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Nil.

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**6 ARIC SCHEDULE OF REPORTING**

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Copy of workplan/schedule of reporting provided as information only. To be dealt with Other Business.

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**7 REPORTS**

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7.1 Chair’s report – Committee performance review – 2023-2024

**RESOLVED** (MacLeod/Wong) That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Performance Review – period 2023-2024 be received and endorsed.

<b>Chair’s Report – Committee performance review – 2023-2024 (Resolution)</b>		
For	Laurie Lefcourt, Andrew MacLeod and Raymond Wong	3
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

7.2 Risk and Compliance

**RESOLVED** (Wong/MacLeod) that the Audit, risk and Improvement Committee receive and note the information presented in this report regarding enterprise risk management and fraud management.

<b>Risk and Compliance(Resolution)</b>		
For	Laurie Lefcourt, Andrew MacLeod and Raymond Wong	3
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

- Rating of General Manager’s risks, and controls, is to be investigated and explained to the committee.
- A workshop around fraud and corruption along with another fraud control survey to be conducted.
- Cyber security information is to be expanded in the risk level in the reports.

7.3 Financial Management report

**RESOLVED** (MacLeod/Wong) that the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee receive and note the information presented in the Financial Management Report – May 2024 regarding:

1. The Final draft Operational plan (incorporating the 2024/25 Budget and ‘Revenue’ policy - adopted at Council’s June 2024 meeting applicable for 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.
2. Interim Audit – Management Letter.
3. Revised audit arrangements for the year ending 30 June 2025.
4. The presentation format of the draft Financial Statements (to 31 March 2024) for year ending 30 June 2024.
5. Revaluation of land and building infrastructure.
6. The Investment report furnished to Council’s June 2024 meeting applicable for the month

<b>Financial Management report (Resolution)</b>		
For	Laurie Lefcourt, Andrew MacLeod and Raymond Wong	3
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

- A log of significant wording from the draft Financial Statements to the Actual report is to be recorded and noted.

7.4 Health Safety and Environment

**RESOLVED** (MacLeod/Wong) that the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee receive and note the information presented in this report regarding Health Safety and Environment (HSE) systems, compliance and reviews.

<b>Health Safety and Environment (Resolution)</b>		
For	Laurie Lefcourt, Andrew MacLeod and Raymond Wong	3
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

*Dane Parsons joined the meeting 10:45am*

- An update on the Workers Compensation claims.
- Report on any significant risks with HSE issues to be included into the next report.
- Timeframe for rollout psychosocial program.

7.5 Audit

**RESOLVED** (Wong/MacLeod) That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee receive and note the:

- (a) Final report on the information management internal audit; and
- (b) Progress against performance of audit actions as presented in the Audit Tracker.

<b>Audit Resolution)</b>
Rous Audit Risk and Improvement Committee Minutes 22 July 2024

For	Laurie Lefcourt, Andrew MacLeod and Raymond Wong	3
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

*Dane Parsons left the meeting 10:55am*

- a one page report on Novus with the rationale around the applications.
- Actions from the record management internal audit transferred into the Audit tracker.

7.6 Other Matters

**RESOLVED** (MacLeod/Wong) That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee

- Receive and note this report, and
- Endorse the revised Internal Audit Charter and Work Plan attached.

<b>Other Matters (Resolution)</b>		
For	Laurie Lefcourt, Andrew MacLeod and Raymond Wong	3
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

- One page report on the currency of Policy and delegations to be presented to the committee at next meeting.
- Amend the workplan to include feedback from the committee.

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**8 NON-STANDARD REPORTS**

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8.1 Dam Safety Audit Reporting

**RESOLVED** (MacLeod/Wong) that the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee:

- Note the report on addressing the results of Dams Safety NSW's Dam Safety Management System Audit.
- Receive a further update at the July 2025 Committee meeting.

<b>Dam Safety Audit Reporting (Resolution)</b>		
For	Laurie Lefcourt, Andrew MacLeod and Raymond Wong	3
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

- Check on the timing of the update on the dam safety management audit system.

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**9 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

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**REVOLVED** (MacLeod/Wong) that the Minutes of the meeting be confirmed as presented.

<b>Confirmation of Minutes (Resolution)</b>		
For	Laurie Lefcourt, Andrew MacLeod and Raymond Wong	3
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

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**10 NEXT MEETING:** 14 October 2024

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**11 CLOSE OF BUSINESS**

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There being no further business the meeting closed at 11:40am.



# Rous County Council Internal Audit Charter

A Charter governing the  
conduct of internal audit



Version	Purpose and description	Approved by ARIC	Approved by Council
1.0	Following adoption of Rous County Council's Risk and Audit Committee Charter at Council's meeting 18 May 2016, the following changes have been made to the Rous County Council's Internal Audit Charter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The term of appointment of the Internal Auditor (consultant) from two years to four years.</li> <li>- Manager Governance titles changed to Manager Governance and Human Services.</li> <li>- Finance and Corporate Services Director title change to Manager Corporate and Commercial.</li> <li>- Removal of references to Richmond River County Council and Far North Coast County Council.</li> </ul>		N/A
2.0	Review following update of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Charter and to incorporate the following amendments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Name of Risk and Audit Committee amended to Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee.</li> <li>- Manager Governance and Human Services titles changed to Group Manager People and Performance.</li> <li>- Manager Corporate and Commercial title changed to Group Manager Corporate and Commercial.</li> </ul>	15/10/2018	N/A
3.0	Routine review and update (minor).	23/11/2020	N/A
4.0	Review of the current charter based on the model document published by the OLG as part of the risk management guidelines	22/07/2024	

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## Background

### Interpretation

Council has established the Internal Audit (IA) Program as a key component of its governance and assurance framework, in compliance with the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* and the Office of Local Government's *Guidelines for risk management and internal audit for local government in NSW*. This Charter provides the framework for the conduct of the IA Program and has been approved by the governing body taking into account the advice of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee ('ARIC').

In this Charter a reference to:

- 'Council' means Rous County Council ('Rous').
- 'Internal Audit Coordinator' ('IAC') means the position within Council's organisational structure so designated by the General Manager within the [Instrument of Delegation and Designation to Council Staff](#).

### Purpose of internal audit

Internal audit is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve Rous' operations and business performance. It helps Rous accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes<sup>1</sup>.

Internal audit provides an independent and objective review and advisory service to provide advice to Rous' governing body, general manager and ARIC about council's governance processes, risk management and control frameworks and its external accountability obligations. It also assists the council to improve its business performance.

### Independence

The IA Program is to be independent of Rous so it can provide an unbiased assessment of operations and risk and control activities. Reporting arrangements are as follows:

- Functionally to the ARIC on the results of completed audits, and for strategic direction and accountability purposes, and
- Administratively to the General Manager to facilitate day-to-day operations.

Internal audit activities are not subject to direction by the Council and management has no role in the exercise of internal audit activities.

The ARIC is responsible for communicating any internal audit issues or information to the governing body. Should the governing body require additional information, a request for the information may be made to the ARIC Chairperson by resolution. The ARIC Chairperson is only required to provide the information requested by the governing body where they are satisfied that it is reasonably necessary for the governing body to receive the information for

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<sup>1</sup> As defined by the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing (2017)



the purposes of performing its functions under the Local Government Act. Individual councillors, not appointed to the ARIC, are not entitled to request or receive information from the ARIC.

The General Manager must consult with the ARIC chairperson before appointing or making decisions affecting the employment of the IAC.

Where the ARIC Chairperson has any concerns about the treatment of the IAC, or any action taken that may compromise their ability to undertake their functions independently, they can report their concerns to the governing body.

The IAC and the outsourced internal auditor are to confirm annually to the ARIC the independence of IA Program from the Council.

### Authority

Council authorises the IAC to have full, free and unrestricted access to all functions, premises, assets, personnel, records and other documentation and information considered necessary for the IAC and outsourced internal auditor to undertake its responsibilities.

All records, documentation and information accessed while undertaking internal audit activities are to be used solely for the conduct of those activities. Any person with internal audit responsibilities (staff or outsourced) are accountable for maintaining the confidentiality of the information they receive.

All internal audit documentation is to remain the property of Rous, including where internal audit services are performed by an external third-party provider.

Information and documents pertaining to the IA Program are not to be made publicly available. Council information that is part of the IA Program may only be released to external parties that are assisting in the IA Program for the purposes of undertaking the responsibilities of the program with the approval of the General Manager, except where it is being provided to an external investigative or oversight agency for the purpose of informing that agency of a matter that may warrant its attention.

### Role

The IA Program is to support the ARIC to review and provide independent advice to the Council in accordance with section 428A of the *Local Government Act 1993*. This includes conducting internal audits of Rous and monitoring the implementation of corrective actions.

The IA Program is to also play an active role in:

- developing and maintaining a culture of accountability and integrity
- facilitating the integration of risk management into day-to-day business activities and processes, and
- promoting a culture of high ethical standards.

The IA Program has no direct authority or responsibility for the activities it reviews.

## Internal audit coordinator

### Outsourced internal audit function

Rous' IA Program is to be led by a member of Council's staff with sufficient skills, knowledge and experience to ensure it fulfils its role and responsibilities to the Council and the ARIC. The IAC must be independent, impartial, unbiased and objective when performing their work and free from any conflicts of interest.

Responsibilities of the IAC include:

- contract management
- managing the internal audit budget
- ensuring the external provider completes internal audits in line with the ARIC's annual work plan and four-year strategic work plan
- forwarding audit reports by the external provider to the ARIC
- acting as a liaison between the external provider and the ARIC
- monitoring implementation of corrective actions that arise from the findings of audits and reporting progress to the ARIC, and
- assisting the ARIC to ensure internal audit activities comply with the Office of Local Government's *Guidelines for risk management and internal audit for local government in NSW*.

IAC is one of several designations and key accountabilities held by the position/s identified as IAC. This position will also hold key responsibilities (including, but not limited to) leading and overseeing organisational risk management and corporate governance practices.

Rous has a framework in place for the sharing of its ARIC<sup>2</sup>. Any shared arrangements for internal audit will leverage and be incorporated into this framework.

### **Out-sourced internal audit team**

Rous is to contract an external third-party provider to undertake its internal audit activities. To ensure the independence of the external provider, the IAC is to ensure the external provider:

- does not conduct any audits on specific Rous operations or areas that they have worked on within the last two years
- is not the same provider conducting Rous' external audit
- is not the auditor of any contractors of Rous that may be subject to the internal audit, and
- can satisfy the requirements of the Office of Local Government's *Guidelines for risk management and internal audit for local government in NSW*.

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<sup>2</sup> Refer to Council's audit, risk and improvement committee Charter for further details.

The IAC must consult with the ARIC and General Manager regarding the appropriateness of the skills, knowledge and experience of any external provider before they are engaged.

The external third-party provider:

- has no responsibility for developing or implementing procedures or systems and does not prepare records or engage in Council functions or activities (except in carrying out its own functions).
- Must attest to its independence, as outlined above, as part of each review conducted under the IA Program.

### Performing internal audit activities

The ARIC must develop a strategic work plan every four years to ensure that the matters listed in Schedule 1 are reviewed and considered by the internal audit function when developing their risk-based program of internal audits. The strategic work plan must be reviewed at least annually to ensure it remains appropriate.

The ARIC must also develop an annual work plan to guide the work of the internal audit function over the forward year.

All internal audit activities are to be performed in a manner that is consistent with relevant professional standards including the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing issued by the Institute of Internal Auditors and current Australian risk management standard.

The IAC is to provide the findings and recommendations of internal audits to the ARIC at the end of each audit. Each report is to include a management response.

An ongoing monitoring system is to be implemented to follow up progress in implementing corrective actions.

The IAC is to ensure that the ARIC is advised at each Committee meeting of the internal audit activities completed during that quarter (if any), progress in implementing the annual work plan and progress made implementing corrective actions.

### Conduct

Internal audit personnel must comply with Rous' Code of Conduct. Complaints about breaches of the Code of Conduct by internal audit personnel are to be dealt with in accordance with the *Procedures for the Administration of the Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW*. The General Manager must consult with the ARIC before any disciplinary action is taken against the IAC in response to a breach of the Code of Conduct.

Internal auditors must also comply with the Code of Ethics for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing issued by the Institute of Internal Auditors.

### Administrative arrangement

### **Audit, risk and improvement committee meetings**

The IAC will attend ARIC meetings as an independent non-voting observer. The IAC can be excluded from meetings by the Committee at any time.

The IAC can meet with the ARIC Chairperson at any time, as necessary, between Committee meetings.

### **External audit**

Internal and external audit activities will be coordinated to help ensure the adequacy of overall audit coverage and to minimise duplication of effort.

Periodic meetings and contact between internal and external audit shall be held to discuss matters of mutual interest and to facilitate coordination.

External audit will have full and free access to all internal audit plans, working papers and reports.

### **Dispute resolution**

The IA Program should maintain an effective working relationship with the Council and the ARIC and seek to resolve any differences they may have in an amicable and professional way by discussion and negotiation.

In the event of a disagreement between the IA Program and the Council, the dispute is to be resolved by the General Manager and/or the ARIC. Disputes between the IA Program and the ARIC are to be resolved by the governing body.

Unresolved disputes regarding compliance with statutory or other requirements are to be referred to the Departmental Chief Executive of the Office of Local Government in writing.

### **Review arrangements**

The ARIC must review the performance of the internal audit function each year and report its findings to the governing body. A strategic review of the performance of the IA Program must be conducted each Council term that considers the views of an external party with a strong knowledge of internal audit and reported to the governing body.

This charter is to be reviewed annually by the ARIC and once each Council term by the governing body. Any substantive changes are to be approved by the governing body.

### **Further information**

For further information on council's internal audit activities, contact the Internal Audit Coordinator on [governance@rous.nsw.gov.au](mailto:governance@rous.nsw.gov.au) or by phone on (02) 6623 3800.

Reviewed by Internal Audit Coordinator

[sign and date]

Reviewed by Chairperson, Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee

[sign and date]

Reviewed by General Manager

[sign and date]

Reviewed by Council in accordance with a resolution of the governing body

[sign and date]

[resolution reference]

DRAFT

## Schedule 1: Internal audit function responsibilities

### Audit

#### Internal audit

- Conduct internal audits as directed by Council's ARIC.
- Implement Council's annual and four-year strategic internal audit work plans.
- Monitor the implementation by Council of corrective actions.
- Assist Council to develop and maintain a culture of accountability and integrity.
- Facilitate the integration of risk management into day-to-day business activities and processes.
- Promote a culture of high ethical standards.

#### External audit

- Provide input and feedback on the financial statement and performance audit coverage proposed by external audit and provide feedback on the audit services provided.
- Review all external plans and reports in respect of planned or completed audits and monitor the council's implementation of audit recommendations.
- Provide advice on action taken on significant issues raised in relevant external audit reports and better practice guides.

### Risk

#### Risk management

Review and advise:

- if Council has in place a current and appropriate risk management framework that is consistent with the Australian risk management standard
- whether Council's risk management framework is adequate and effective for identifying and managing the risks the council faces, including those associated with individual projects, programs and other activities
- if risk management is integrated across all levels of the council and across all processes, operations, services, decision-making, functions and reporting
- of the adequacy of risk reports and documentation, for example, Council's risk register and risk profile
- whether a sound approach has been followed in developing risk management plans for major projects or undertakings
- whether appropriate policies and procedures are in place for the management and exercise of delegations
- if Council has taken steps to embed a culture which is committed to ethical and lawful behaviour
- if there is a positive risk culture within the council and strong leadership that supports effective risk management

- of the adequacy of staff training and induction in risk management
- how Council's risk management approach impacts on the council's insurance arrangements
- of the effectiveness of Council's management of its assets, and
- of the effectiveness of business continuity arrangements, including business continuity plans, disaster recovery plans and the periodic testing of these plans.

## **Internal controls**

Review and advise:

- whether Council's approach to maintaining an effective internal audit framework, including over external parties such as contractors and advisors, is sound and effective
- whether Council has in place relevant policies and procedures and that these are periodically reviewed and updated
- whether appropriate policies and procedures are in place for the management and exercise of delegations
- whether staff are informed of their responsibilities and processes and procedures to implement controls are complied with
- if Council's monitoring and review of controls is sufficient, and
- if internal and external audit recommendations to correct internal control weaknesses are implemented appropriately.

## **Compliance**

Review and advise of the adequacy and effectiveness of the council's compliance framework, including:

- if Council has appropriately considered legal and compliance risks as part of the council's risk management framework
- how Council manages its compliance with applicable laws, regulations, policies, procedures, codes, and contractual arrangements, and
- whether appropriate processes are in place to assess compliance.

## **Fraud and corruption**

Review and advise of the adequacy and effectiveness of the council's fraud and corruption prevention framework and activities, including whether the council has appropriate processes and systems in place to capture and effectively investigate fraud-related information.

## **Financial management**

Review and advise:

- if Council is complying with accounting standards and external accountability requirements
- of the appropriateness of the council's accounting policies and disclosures

- of the implications for Council of the findings of external audits and performance audits and Council's responses and implementation of recommendations
- whether Council's financial statement preparation procedures and timelines are sound
- the accuracy of Council's annual financial statements prior to external audit, including:
  - management compliance/representations
  - significant accounting and reporting issues
  - the methods used by the council to account for significant or unusual transactions and areas of significant estimates or judgements
  - appropriate management signoff on the statements
- if effective processes are in place to ensure financial information included in Council's report is consistent with signed financial statements
- if Council's financial management processes are adequate
- the adequacy of cash management policies and procedures
- if there are adequate controls over financial processes, for example:
  - appropriate authorisation and approval of payments and transactions
  - adequate segregation of duties
  - timely reconciliation of accounts and balances
  - review of unusual and high value purchases
- if policies and procedures for management review and consideration of the financial position and performance of the council are adequate
- if Council's grants and tied funding policies and procedures are sound.

## **Governance**

Review and advise of the adequacy of the council governance framework, including the council's:

- decision-making processes
- implementation of governance policies and procedures
- reporting lines and accountability
- assignment of key roles and responsibilities
- committee structure
- management oversight responsibilities
- human resources and performance management activities
- reporting and communication activities
- information and communications technology (ICT) governance, and
- management and governance of the use of data, information and knowledge.

## **Improvement**

### **Strategic planning**

Review and advise:



- of the adequacy and effectiveness of the council's integrated, planning and reporting (IP&R) processes
- if appropriate reporting and monitoring mechanisms are in place to measure progress against objectives, and
- whether Council is successfully implementing and achieving its IP&R objectives and strategies.

### **Service reviews and business improvement**

Review and advise:

- if Council has robust systems to set objectives and goals to determine and deliver appropriate levels of service to the community and business performance
- if appropriate reporting and monitoring mechanisms are in place to measure service delivery to the community and overall performance, and
- how Council can improve its service delivery and performance of its business and functions generally

### **Performance data and measurement**

Review and advise:

- if Council has a robust system to determine appropriate performance indicators to measure the achievement of its strategic objectives
- if the performance indicators Council uses are effective, and
- of the adequacy of performance data collection and reporting.



# Rous County Council Internal Audit Charter

A Charter governing the  
conduct of internal audit



Version	Purpose and description	Approved by ARIC
1.0	<p>Following adoption of Rous County Council's Risk and Audit Committee Charter at Council's meeting 18 May 2016, the following changes have been made to the Rous County Council's Internal Audit Charter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The term of appointment of the Internal Auditor (consultant) from two years to four years.</li> <li>- Manager Governance titles changed to Manager Governance and Human Services.</li> <li>- Finance and Corporate Services Director title change to Manager Corporate and Commercial.</li> <li>- Removal of references to Richmond River County Council and Far North Coast County Council.</li> </ul>	
2.0	<p>Review following update of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Charter and to incorporate the following amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Name of Risk and Audit Committee amended to Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee.</li> <li>- Manager Governance and Human Services titles changed to Group Manager People and Performance.</li> <li>- Manager Corporate and Commercial title changed to Group Manager Corporate and Commercial.</li> </ul>	15/10/2018
3.0	Routine review and update (minor).	23/11/2020

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## **Part 1: Background**

### **1.1 Interpretation**

This Charter is the 'Internal Audit Charter' and should be read in conjunction with the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Charter. It is made having regard to the sample Internal Audit Charter contained in the Department of Local Government Guidelines under section 23A of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

In this Charter a reference to 'Council' means Rous County Council.

### **1.2 Purpose**

The Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee is a committee of Rous County Council under section 355 of the *Local Government Act 1993*. The Committee does not have financial delegation.

The Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Charter requires that the Committee adopt an Internal Audit Charter which outlines, among other things, the expected professional standards to be adhered to and the applicable reporting relationships between the Internal Auditor (consultant), the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee, the General Manager and Audit Office of NSW contracted external auditor.

This Internal Audit Charter is a formal statement of purpose, authority and responsibility for internal audit. It outlines the legal and operational framework under which Council's internal audit function will operate and it authorises Council staff to facilitate the delivery of the Committee's Internal Audit Plan Services as approved by the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee.

The mission of internal audit is to provide independent assessment and validation of the effectiveness of internal control frameworks from both a risk mitigation and efficiency viewpoint. It is primarily designed to add value through the continuous improvement of Council's risk management, control and governance processes.

### **1.3 Role and authority**

As provided in the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Charter, Rous County Council will engage an internal auditor (consultant) to perform internal audit work for and on behalf of Council. While the internal audit (consultant) reports directly to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee, it is coordinated by the Governance Advisor whom is authorised to direct the implementation of the Internal Audit Plan approved by the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee. For this purpose, the internal audit (consultant) is authorised to have full and unrestricted access to all functions, property, personnel, records, information, accounts, files, monies and other documentation, as necessary for the conduct of their work. Their terms of engagement must include a specific element regarding confidentiality.

#### 1.4 Objectivity, independence, conflict of interest and organisational status

The internal audit (consultant):

- Will perform internal audit activities in such a manner that they have an honest belief in their work product and that no significant quality compromises are made. Further, the internal audit (consultant) undertakes that they will not subordinate their judgment on internal audit matters to that of others. The internal audit (consultant) is not responsible for operational activities on a daily basis, or in the detailed development or implementation of new or changed systems, or for internal checking processes.
- Has independent status within Council and for this purpose is accountable to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee and administratively responsible to the General Manager.
- Must remain independent of the activities being audited whereby they must not audit work areas or work which they have previously undertaken or delivered for Council. Whilst the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing ('Standards') provide guidance on this point and allow this to occur after 12 months, each instance should be carefully assessed.

When engaging the internal audit (consultant) Council will take steps to identify, evaluate the significance, and manage any perceived or actual conflicts of interest that may impinge upon internal audit work. The Internal Audit (consultant) has a duty to report to the Governance Advisor any situation where they feel their objectivity may be impaired or where a conflict of interest (perceived or actual) may exist. The Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee must be advised of any such report.

**The work of the internal audit (consultant) does not relieve Council staff from their accountability to discharge their responsibilities.** All staff are responsible for risk management and the operation and enhancement of internal control. This includes responsibility for implementing remedial action or recommendations endorsed by management following an internal audit.

#### 1.5 Skills and conduct

The internal audit (consultant) must:

1. Possess the knowledge, skills and technical proficiency essential to the performance of internal audits.
2. Be skilled in dealing with people and in communicating audit issues effectively.
3. Maintain their technical competence through a program of continuing education.
4. Exercise due professional care in performing internal audit engagements.
5. Conduct themselves in a professional manner.
6. Conduct their activities in a manner consistent with the Standards and Code of Ethics issued by the Institute of Internal Auditors, Australia including the International

Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing. The internal audit (consultant) manager or appointed lead assigned to oversee an audit is required to be a member of the Institute of Internal Auditors.

## **Part 2: Scope of work and methodology**

The scope of services provided by the internal audit (consultant) may include but is not limited to:

1. The examination and evaluation of the adequacy and effectiveness of systems of internal control, risk management, governance, and the status of ethical behaviour.
2. Ascertaining conformity with the goals and objectives of the Council.
3. Assessment of the economic and efficient use of resources.
4. The examination of compliance with policies, procedures, plans and legislation.
5. Assessment of the reliability and integrity of information.
6. Assessment of the safeguarding of assets.
7. Any special investigations as directed by the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee.
8. All activities of the Council, whether financial or non-financial, manual or computerised.

### **2.1 Internal audit methodology**

The internal audit (consultant) will use the most appropriate methodology for each internal audit engagement, depending on the nature of the activity and the pre-determined parameters for the engagement. Generally, internal audits will have regard to the International Professional Practices Framework, Institute of Internal Auditors, and include:

1. Planning.
2. Reviewing and assessing risks in the context of the audit objectives.
3. Examination and evaluation of information.
4. Communicating results.
5. Following up on implementation of audit recommendations.

### **2.2 Operating principles**

Internal audit will conform with industry standards in relation to audit, for example:

1. The Standards and Code of Ethics issued by the Institute of Internal Auditors.
2. Where relevant, the Statement on Information Systems Auditing Standards issued by the Information Systems and Control Association.
3. Relevant auditing standards issued by the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board.



## **Part 3: Other**

### **3.1 Reporting**

The Governance Advisor will submit to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee a report summarising all audit activities undertaken during the period preceding a meeting, indicating:

1. Internal audit engagements completed or in progress.
2. Outcomes of each internal audit engagement undertaken.
3. Remedial action taken or in progress.

On completion of each internal audit the internal audit (consultant) will issue a report detailing the objective and scope of the audit, and resulting issues based on the outcome of the audit.

The internal audit (consultant) will seek from the General Manager an agreed and endorsed action plan outlining remedial action to be taken, along with an implementation timetable and person responsible. Responsible officers must, as and when required, provide written responses to management and action plans regarding issues and recommendations contained in internal audit reports.

The work of the internal audit (consultant) is solely for the benefit of Council and is not to be relied on or provided to any other person or organisation, except where this is formally authorised by the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee.

### **3.2 Internal audit planning requirements**

The internal audit (consultant) is to use a risk-based rolling program of internal audits to establish an annual Internal Audit Plan to reflect a program of audits over a three year period. This approach provides Council with some continuity across the four year appointment term for the internal audit (consultant). It also means that Council can be flexible, dynamic and responsive in order to meet changing needs and priorities.

The internal audit (consultant) must prepare an annual Internal Audit Plan for review and approval by the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee. The annual Internal Audit Plan will be based on an assessment of the goals, objectives and business risks of Council and take into consideration any special requirements of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee and General Manager.

The Governance Advisor, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee, has authority to adjust the Internal Audit Plan as a result of receiving special requests from management to conduct reviews that are not on the Plan, for example where an incident has occurred. Any such adjustment is to be reported to the next meeting of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee. Such adjustments are subject to budget availability.

### **3.3 Co-ordination with external audit**

The Governance Advisor in cooperation with the Finance Manager will, as necessary, facilitate consultation between the internal audit (consultant) and the Audit Office of NSW contracted external auditor to discuss matters of mutual interest, to co-ordinate audit activity, and to reduce duplication of audit effort.

### **3.4 Review of the Internal Audit Charter**

The Governance Advisor will periodically review the Internal Audit Charter to ensure it remains up-to-date and reflects the current scope of internal audit work.

### **3.5 Evaluation of internal audit**

Performance measures (key performance indicators) against which to evaluate the performance of the internal audit (consultant) will be established and where appropriate incorporated into Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.

### **3.6 Review**

Changes to this Internal Audit Charter are to be referred to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee for approval.

## Purified Recycled Water Investigations Report and Update

*Responsible Officer: Group Manager Planning and Delivery (Andrew Logan)*

### Recommendation:

That Council:

1. Receive and note the *Purified Recycled Water (PRW) Investigations Report (Attachment 1)*.
2. Defer further investigations into a Purified Recycled Water pilot / demonstration plant until Purified Recycled Water becomes a viable Stage 3 source option.

### Background

Purified Recycled Water (PRW) involves taking treated wastewater and using advanced treatment to produce drinking water. There are two main types of PRW implementation - Indirect Potable Reuse (IPR) and Direct Potable Reuse (DPR).

IPR schemes involve the use of an environmental buffer such as a surface water reservoir (surface water augmentation) or aquifer (groundwater augmentation). In these schemes, the purified water is sent into the environment and then re-extracted and treated at a traditional water treatment plant.

DPR schemes do not involve an environmental buffer. The purified water is sent either directly to the network (Treated Water Augmentation (TWA)) or to the intake of a water treatment plant (Raw Water Augmentation (RWA)).

The regulatory situation varies for the different types of scheme implementations. However, in all instances the schemes will need to demonstrate that safe drinking water can be produced.

### Future Water Project 2060

The Future Water Project 2060<sup>1</sup> considered several potential Stage 3 water source options as part of its development. These sources include surface water, groundwater, desalination, water efficiency and PRW. Stage 3 options are considered as medium to longer term water sources with potential implementation between 2030 and 2060.

The Future Water Project incorporated information from a preliminary feasibility investigation by City Water Technology (CWT) in 2020<sup>2</sup>. Resulting in the following actions being recommended:

- *Development and implementation of a direct potable reuse pilot scheme.*
- *Additional investigations into the feasibility of indirect potable reuse as part of the regional water supply.*

### Council Resolution – Future Water Project Actions

Following these recommendations Council resolved in 2020 [61/20] to undertake the following innovative actions:

**6. iii) a) Progress Perradenya Estate pilot purified recycled water scheme and work with relevant stakeholders to design a long-term public education campaign to increase awareness and acceptance of indirect potable reuse (IPR) and direct potable reuse (DPR).**

<sup>1</sup> Rous Regional Supply: Future Water Project 2060 – Integrated Water Cycle Management – **Hydrosphere** - April 2022

<sup>2</sup> Preliminary Feasibility Report – Investigation of Water Reuse as an Additional Water Source – **City Water Technology | Tonkin** – May 2020

**6. iii) b)** Investigate concurrently IPR and DPR schemes utilising effluent from Ballina, Lennox, south and east Lismore wastewater treatment plants (preferred options for water reuse identified in the CWT report).

#### Subsequent Council Resolution 2022 - Demonstration or Pilot Plant

Based on regulatory feedback, industry consultation and internal research, Council resolved in 2022 [82/22] to:

- a) Take no further action to progress a pilot purified recycled water scheme at the Perradenya Estate as part of the Future Water Project 2060.
- b) Continue to investigate the possibility of implementing a Purified Recycled Water pilot at the most advantageous location to meet strategic objectives of the Future Water Project 2060.
- c) Delay any significant investigations into a Purified Recycled Water pilot until such time as the Purified Recycled Water for Drinking Investigations – Option Assessment of Indirect and Direct Potable Reuse Schemes has been completed.
- d) Consider the comparative viability of Purified Recycled Water as a potential Stage 3 option when assessing whether to proceed with additional pilot investigations.

#### Purified Recycled Water Investigations – Scoping, Procurement and Timeline

The PRW Investigation scope was expanded to include all the wastewater treatment plants in the region, rather than just those shortlisted in the 2020 CWT investigation. The previous investigations only considered IPR options, and thus reassessment of all treatment plants would be beneficial to understand the viability of DPR schemes in the region.

The scope was discussed with numerous stakeholders including staff from the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW, formerly DPIE/DPE). A stakeholder workshop was held in September 2022 to facilitate this engagement.

The project scope for the consultant included two separable portions:

- Separable Portion 1 – Scheme review and option identification, information collection, scheme information assessment and scope development.
- Separable Portion 2 - Treatment train investigations, costings, and option assessment.

An open tender process occurred, leading to the award of the contract to Tyr Group in March 2023, with the initial work focused on Separable Portion 1. Separable Portion 2 was awarded in October 2023, with practical completion in June 2024, and a final report issued in July 2024. A Council workshop providing a summary of the report contents was held in July 2024.

#### **Summary of Report – PRW Schemes**

This work has been completed by a range of water, wastewater and water recycling professionals/experts with considerable experience across PRW, both nationally and internationally. This includes experience in regulatory development, research, project design, implementation, and operation in projects across many locations including Singapore, the United States, Australia and South Africa.

The *Purified Recycled Water Investigations Report* (the Report) compared four different implementations of PRW in Rous's region. The implementation of PRW to date is understood to be more expensive than conventional sources (i.e. surface water and groundwater) and based on the findings in the Report, our region is no exception.

For the bulk of the PRW schemes considered, the capital costs are similar if not more expensive than desalination. However, this comparison will be further informed when updated secure yield modelling is completed later in 2024.

The most cost-effective option identified in the investigations (Lismore Raw Water Augmentation Scheme to Nightcap Water Treatment Plant) has significant regulatory challenges. RWA is a type of DPR or “direct augmentation.” In RWA, treated wastewater is purified via advanced treatment, and then blended with raw water source and fed to an existing water treatment plant (WTP). In this case, the purified wastewater would be blended with raw water from Wilsons River, and/or Rocky Creek Dam, and fed to Nightcap WTP. The key advantage of this scheme is that it can utilise existing transfer infrastructure (i.e. the pipeline and high-pressure pump stations that transfer Wilsons River water to Nightcap WTP). This results in a lower estimated cost than the alternative shortlisted options, and it also has the benefit of distributing the treated water widely across the network.

This produced water would need to comply with both the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG) and the Australian Guidelines for Water Recycling (AGWR). At present, the AGWR primarily focuses on IPR rather than DPR. Whilst there is some mention of DPR in the AGWR, it does not provide the same level of guidance as to how these schemes should be assessed. This means that there is not a straightforward approval pathway for such a scheme under the current national guidelines.

However, it should be noted that the equivalent World Health Organisation guidance documents do provide a more in-depth consideration of how DPR schemes may be considered, and that this document adopts an approach that is consistent with Australian guidelines. Furthermore, there is growing consensus in the Australian water sector that an updated AGWR is required to be inclusive of DPR schemes, and potentially be integrated into the ADWG. This position has been advocated by staff from NSW regulators and Australian experts. Staff note that such an outcome would require coordination between state and federal governments, and such an endeavour is outside of Rous’s direct sphere of influence.

At this stage of the Future Water Project, moderately prospective conventional schemes (i.e. surface and groundwater) offer better value and lower risk than even the most cost effective PRW schemes identified in the *Purified Recycled Water Investigations Report*. For example, saline groundwater schemes (i.e. saline groundwater being more costly and difficult to treat than non-saline groundwater schemes) may be more preferred than a PRW option. For saline groundwater schemes, the potential avenues for concentrate disposal are expected to be a key limitation. If a suitable concentrate discharge location could be identified, it would be reasonable to expect that this type of scheme would require less costly treatment and lower transfer infrastructure costs than the shortlisted PRW schemes in the Report.

One of the main limitations identified in the Report is the availability of wastewater and resultant limitations on the scale of the scheme’s infrastructure. The identified schemes are limited to ~10 million litres (ML)/day or less. This is not sufficient to reach economies of scale that are normally seen in other installations around the world (typically ~40 ML/day or larger). The fixed cost associated with compliance, testing, process monitoring, instrumentation, auditing, operational staff, and control systems are significant and at this small scale, the result is higher water charges than would not otherwise occur in larger schemes, where these fixed costs are a lower percentage of the total capital expenditure.

### **Report Outcomes – Pilot or Demonstration Plant**

One of the barriers to entry for PRW is obtaining approval from regulators in the absence of a prescriptive NSW regulatory framework whilst demonstrating social licence from the community.

The Report proposes a pathway to achieve this with a demonstration plant. The implementation of a pilot or demonstration plant is primarily a way to seek approval for a PRW scheme by addressing the 12 elements of the AGWR, which is a risk-based framework that is used to ensure that produced water is fit for purpose.

As such, without a clear intention to seek approval for a specific PRW scheme, the implementation of a pilot or demonstration plant does not represent good value for money for the community.

Staff have reviewed the outcomes of the Report and consider that a temporary re-deployable pilot plant would potentially be more cost effective, whilst still able to action the regulatory approval requirements and act as a focal point for community engagement to seek social license.

A pilot or demonstration plant may be considered in future if a specific PRW scheme was identified as a preferred Stage 3 option and Council was seeking to commence the approval process.

### **Governance**

The *Purified Recycled Water Investigations Report* will be an input into a future review of the Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy (IWCM). The updated IWCM will be presented to Council for consideration at that time. As such, no specific actions are necessary at this stage.

- **Finance**

The project received partial grant funding as part of the NSW Government's *Safe and Secure Water Program*. The project was completed within the approved budget amount.

Subject to Council's decision, budget allocations for further PRW investigations, and a pilot or demonstration PRW plant will be removed from the Long-Term Financial Plan.

Rous has one residual commitment relating to manufactured water research with a modest contribution of \$15,000 (excl. GST) in relation to administering the National Validation Framework (NatVal) for the next 3 years. The Australian Water Recycling Centre of Excellence (2009- 2016) lead the NatVal project. The aim of NatVal is to create a universally agreed validation framework for treatment technologies utilised in water recycling. Being part of this network provides a low-cost option for Rous to support the broader industry in working towards establishing a regulatory framework for manufactured water that will better support authentic options for water authorities into the future.

### **Consultation**

The scope of the project was developed in consultation with a range of stakeholders including staff from NSW DCCEEW and staff from other NSW water utilities such as Sydney Water and Hunter Water.

The main consultants on the project, TYR Group, utilised specialist review from international and Australian experts.

### **Conclusion**

The attached *Purified Recycled Water Investigations Report* provides detailed information about potential PRW schemes, which can be used to better understand the various aspects of PRW. The Report provides comprehensive information from which to compare other stage 3 options such as surface water, groundwater and desalination.

It is not anticipated that any additional short to medium term investigations or actions will be required at this time to progress PRW investigations as part of potential Stage 3 options or a pilot \ demonstration plant. The option of PRW is now well understood for comparison and decision-making as part of the Future Water Project. The role of the pilot/demonstration plant has been clarified, and it would only be prudent if Council decides to pursue approval of a PRW scheme.

At current, the most prospective PRW scheme does not have a clear pathway for regulatory approval due to a gap in national regulatory guidelines for DPR. This scheme, Raw Water

Augmentation Scheme from Lismore to Nightcap Treatment Plant via the Wilsons River pump station, should be considered as a watching brief, with potential reconsideration if the regulatory situation changes significantly. This scheme compares favourably in terms of cost per capacity to recently identified desalination schemes, and therefore has potential to be one of the most cost-effective rainfall independent options available as a potential stage 3 option.

Despite this, the estimated costs are still significantly higher than those for previously explored conventional options such as surface water and groundwater schemes. Error! Bookmark not defined.

The next element of work related to Purified Recycled Water is expected to be undertaken as part of the next review of the Integrated Water Cycle Management (IWCM) Strategy, which will incorporate the learnings from this Report.

**Attachment:**

1. *Purified Recycled Water for Drinking Investigations – Project Report – Tyr Group – July 2024*  
<https://rous.nsw.gov.au/page.asp?f=RES-XTX-57-42-23>

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## Desalination Options Assessment Report

*Responsible Officer: Group Manager Planning and Delivery (Andrew Logan)*

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### Recommendation:

That Council:

1. Receive and note the *Desalination Options Assessment Report (June 2024)* ([Attachment 1](#)).
2. Include Temporary Desalination as an option for consideration in an adaptive approach for the next revision of the Drought Management Plan.
3. Continue to focus planning efforts on preventative measures to reduce the impact of future droughts, through additional source augmentations.
4. Note the significant cost of a Permanent Desalination plant and poor comparison to previously costed groundwater and surface water alternatives.
5. Include Permanent Desalination, and the learnings from the Report, as an option for consideration in the next update to Rous's Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy (IWCM).

### Project Background

Desalination removes salts and other minerals from seawater to produce high-quality drinking water. A process called reverse osmosis is commonly used, where saltwater is pushed through a membrane that filters salt and mineral content.

The size of a desalination plant can range from a small unit the size of a shipping container, to large plants that can provide hundreds of millions of litres of drinking water a day.

### Future Water Project 2060

The Future Water Project 2060<sup>1</sup> considered several potential Stage 3 water source options as part of its development. These sources include surface water, groundwater, desalination, water efficiency and Purified Recycled Water (PRW). Stage 3 options are considered as medium to longer term water sources with potential implementation between 2030 and 2060. The Future Water Project 2060 not only identified desalination as a potential longer term water source but also as an emergency source option as part of the Regional Water Supply Drought Management Plan.

The inclusion of Desalination as a Stage 3 option in the Future Water Project 2060 was derived from a previous investigation by Ganden Engineers in 2020<sup>2</sup> preliminary investigation by Ganden Engineers provided significant information, including a detailed comparison of the types of technologies that should be employed.

However, several data gaps and key risks remained, and the Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy (IWCM) report suggested these should be resolved prior to any decision to proceed with the planning and approvals for a desalination option. These risks included location, electricity and water network integration, capital and operating cost, environmental approvals, marine park impacts, land acquisition, community engagement and detailed design.

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<sup>1</sup> Rous Regional Supply: Future Water Project 2060 - Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy – Hydrosphere Consulting - April 2022

<sup>2</sup> Rous County Council Desalination Investigation - Investigation Report Number: 1364-IR-001 2022, GanDen Engineers and Project Managers



## **Desalination Investigations – Scoping, Procurement and Timeline**

Beca Hunter H2O was engaged through a supplier panel arrangement and awarded the contract to complete an options assessment into temporary desalination as a drought response, and also assess the role of permanent desalination. This investigation relates to both Rous's Drought Management Planning and IWCM.

The output from Beca Hunter H2O is a *Desalination Options Assessment Report* (the Report) (Attachment 1).

In the scoping of the options assessment, it was identified that temporary desalination plants have significant limitations and challenges. This led to consideration of permanent desalination as not only a possible longer term water source but also as a drought response option.

The concept of temporary desalination plants in the *Regional Water Supply Drought Management Plan 2016* (DMP) was heavily influenced by the 2014 Lower Hunter Water Plan. However, the temporary desalination approach was abandoned by Hunter Water in favour of a permanent drought response option in the updated Lower Hunter Water Security Plan 2022. A permanent drought response option is essentially where a permanent desalination plant is implemented in response to drought, with readiness actions and drought triggers documented in a drought management plan.

It is Rous's understanding that the temporary desalination approach was abandoned due to the complexity and cost of seeking approvals for multiple small desalination plants. Small desalination plants which exceed \$10 million individually, each require an environmental impact statement to progress approvals.

In addition, the experience of MidCoast Council in implementing the Nabiac Desalination plant (a temporary plant used as an emergency source) was not overly favourable. This is despite MidCoast Council having a favourable site for a temporary plant, at an existing groundwater treatment plant. The favourable aspects of the site included, having Council owned land adjacent to an estuary (i.e. short intake), with existing water and electrical network connections. However, the implementation of the temporary plant faced challenges during construction and the project was ultimately cancelled prior to implementation due to rain and the breaking of the drought.

The learnings for Rous were that permanent desalination could be considered as a permanent drought response and raised awareness of the potential challenges associated with the implementation of temporary desalination plants in a short timeframe.

As such the scope of the investigations was expanded to include consideration of permanent desalination plants as a potential drought response. This would also provide an opportunity to resolve some of the existing knowledge gaps about desalination as a potential water source.

The scope was discussed with numerous stakeholders including staff from the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEE, formerly DPIE/DPE).

## **Temporary Desalination**

Temporary desalination was identified as one of several potential emergency source options as part of the DMP. The DMP detailed the following activation requirements for temporary desalination, with an expected timing of greater than 3 months:

- Determine suitable site/s
- Source package treatment plants
- Establish power supplies
- Determine brine disposal procedures.

The DMP also noted that:

*“Further work is required to progress this option as a viable emergency source including site selection studies, approval requirements, technical and environmental investigations, and a review of procurement options. Ongoing research into potential improvements in desalination technology will be monitored on an on-going basis.”*

Temporary desalination has also been identified in the Future Water Project 2060:

*“Use of portable desalination units is one way of diversifying supply sources and reducing the risk of running out of water in an extreme drought. The units would be removed when no longer required.”*

A review and update of the DMP was initiated in August 2021. Critical drought modelling<sup>3</sup> was conducted as part of the Background Information and Recommended Plan Components<sup>4</sup> undertaken as part of the DMP development. A review and scoping document was used to determine and inform the update of the DMP. The drought response modelling highlighted that Rous’s bulk water system can simultaneously have acceptable water security based on a 5/10/10 secure yield approach due to high and reliable rainfall, but that our system can be vulnerable to rapid dam depletion during severe and catastrophic droughts due to our modest storage volume. This modelling provides an assessment of how much time may be available for readiness and trigger actions in relation to emergency drought sources.

The Report provides an understanding of the requirements to implement desalination as a response to drought. For temporary desalination plants, the Report outlines that appropriate dam level triggers cannot be selected for low or moderate risk approaches (i.e. 60-70% Rocky Creek Dam level). The selection of dam level triggers based on a higher-risk approach (i.e. 50% Rocky Creek Dam level) does not provide enough time to guarantee that a temporary desalination plant would be operational when needed and with sufficient capacity to meet Level 5 emergency demand levels, particularly as the severity of droughts increases.

One of the difficulties associated with the selection of dam level triggers is that any Council decision to proceed with the implementation of a temporary desalination plant, would result in significant commitment of funds at that point (i.e. expected to be ~20% of the total project cost at trigger point and ~50% within 3 months of trigger point). This is because Rous would require suppliers to guarantee equipment and material deliveries within a certain timeframe. This would force contractors/suppliers to negotiate contract arrangements that recover their costs in the event of project cancellation.

Even at the proposed trigger level (i.e. 50% RCD Level), by far the most probable future outcome from this trigger (as indicated by internal modelling) is that the drought will break without the need to implement the temporary plant. Hence in the pathway proposed in the Report, Council would be asked to commit to significant expenditure with the understanding that an emergency response plant will not be necessary in more than 90% of instances.

The Report identifies a pathway by which costs can be deferred by adopting a just-in-time approach. The main cost item identified which would need to be committed to up-front and as a priority, is the seeking of approval (i.e. Environmental Impact Statement), which can take upwards of 24 months. Otherwise, the emergency supply option would be reliant on an ‘emergency’ approval for it to be implemented. Such an emergency approval would be at the discretion of the NSW Water Minister, without a guarantee that it would be forthcoming. Additionally, the emergency approval would not necessarily override all planning and implementation approval requirements.

Attempts to defer costs for the establishment of a temporary desalination plant in an emergency scenario come with a significant risk. Rous may be forced to enter a supply constrained market

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<sup>3</sup> Drought Response Modelling – **Engeny** - August 2023

<sup>4</sup> Background Information and Recommended Plan Components: Interim Drought Arrangements and Longer-Term Drought Plan – **Hydrosphere Consulting** – October 2023

and consequently incur cost at rates higher than current market values. Scarcity might result from increased demand for containerised desalination systems, caused by widespread drought conditions across multiple regions and water utilities. This makes any business case for a temporary desalination plant difficult to evaluate.

However, it is reasonable to anticipate that in future severe droughts, the costs of containerised plants may be significantly higher than current conditions. Consequently, any attempt by Rous to defer costs, has an elevated risk of incurring higher costs at a potential future implementation point. In addition, as the inventory of temporary desalination plants is modest, there is no guarantee that any units will be available for Rous to procure, posing a significant inherent risk for the successful implementation of a temporary desalination plant.

The Report provides Rous with the key information needed to assess the utility of temporary desalination. Given the implementation of this project would coincide with severe or catastrophic droughts, it would be ideal if Rous can avoid the circumstances requiring its implementation. It is anticipated that the best way to avoid these kind of emergency responses, is to focus on ways to increase the region's baseline water security. Rous can, for instance, consider modelled drought scenarios as a sensitivity analysis when considering the timing and selection of future water source augmentations.

This does not mean that Rous should completely disregard temporary desalination as a potential emergency response, as it is a useful option of last resort. It could be used to provide small to moderate volumes of water to the community in an emergency, but its implementation would only mitigate the worst of circumstances (i.e. an ongoing supply below Level 5 during a day-zero scenario).

The learnings in the Report can be considered by Council in comparison to other potential drought response options (both permanent and emergency) and compared to augmentation of water supplies with new sources.

### **Desalination - Stage 3 Option of Future Water Project**

The Report builds on previous desalination investigations, providing a more comprehensive approach to site selection and considers larger desalination plants which can service more than one of the coastal population centres (i.e. provide water to both Ballina and Byron).

The Report highlights that the site selection is significantly constrained by limitations resulting from the Cape Byron Marine Park. In particular, the Marine Park would significantly increase the cost, complexity and overall risk associated with marine intake and outtake infrastructure (i.e. the cost of intake and outtake structures are expected to be greater than \$20,000 per metre).

The Report has considered the objectives of the marine park zones in the Cape Byron Marine Park and the potential ecological and environmental impacts of desalination. To comply with the existing objectives of the marine park, it was determined that any intake and outtake structures would need to be in the general-purpose zones and could not be in the sanctuary or habitat protection zones. This approach did not consider other potential pathways, such as seeking the potential re-zoning of the Marine Park to accommodate intake and outtake structures. This meant that the length of intake and outtake structures would be significantly longer for most sites adjacent to the Marine Park. The increased length adds tens of millions of dollars onto the estimated project capital costs. Additionally, the deeper water depth at these locations may significantly complicate the installation and maintenance of intake and outtake structures, meaning that the typical use of divers would not be practicable, raising technical feasibility concerns.

The Marine Park extends from Brunswick Heads to Lennox Head. The upper edge (Brunswick Heads) is quite remote from the main population centres of Ballina and Byron, requiring extensive water transfer infrastructure, making these locations less viable. As a result, the site selection process concluded that beyond the northern extent of the Marine Park was not an appropriate site for a permanent desalination plant. This naturally leads to the preferred sites being identified

beyond the southern extent of the Marine Park. Whilst a preliminary site selection process has identified specific lots in Ballina Shire, there is a potential this would be further refined if additional investigations were undertaken.

In terms of cost, there has been a substantial change to the high-level cost estimates since Council's previous investigation in 2020. This is understood to be driven by changes in construction costs. Take for example the experience of Hunter Water with their planning for Belmont Desalination plant: cost estimates for the 30 ML/day plant escalated from ~\$200 million to ~\$530 million between 2020 and 2023. That project is equivalent to the concept considered in Rous's recent investigation, albeit at a larger capacity.

In summary, the Report provides Council with additional understanding of potential site locations for a full-scale permanent desalination plant. The Report identifies that costs are likely to be significantly higher than previously estimated, even when accounting for inflation. The costs of desalination as a potential Stage 3 option now appear to be significantly higher than the previously estimated costs on a capacity basis for the more conventional options of groundwater and surface water.

Subsequently, it is reasonable to expect that even moderate to poor conventional water source options (eg. saline groundwater) may be comparatively more cost-effective than the identified desalination schemes, reinforcing the previously indicated view in the Future Water Project 2060 that desalination is not an economically attractive option.

### **Governance**

The *Desalination Options Assessment Report* (June 2024) will be an input into a future review of the Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy (IWCM). The updated IWCM will be presented to Council for consideration at that time. As such, no specific actions are necessary at this stage.

- **Finance**

The *Desalination Options Assessment Report* received partial grant funding as part of the NSW Government's Safe and Secure Water Program. The project was completed within the approved budget amount.

### **Consultation**

The project scope was developed in conjunction with NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW, formerly DPIE/DPE).

Site selection criteria were developed in conjunction with the consultant (BECA Hunter H2O), Council Staff, and representatives from NSW DCCEEW (formerly DPIE/DPE).

### **Conclusion – Temporary Desalination**

The feasibility of temporary desalination has been investigated and, without the upfront construction of assets, there are inherent implementation risks which cannot be resolved in the available timeframes during a severe or catastrophic drought. Temporary desalination therefore is not a guaranteed way to maintain water supplies in a drought emergency.

Rous's small water storage means that there is not a large amount of time to implement reactive measures during a drought.

Additional planning for desalination as an emergency drought response measure is not likely to significantly alter Rous's overall vulnerability to drought, or significantly improve the risk profile of Rous's drought response in maintaining Level 5 emergency supplies when exposed to a severe or catastrophic drought.

Planning efforts should focus on preventative measures to reduce the impact of future droughts, as these measures can be implemented ahead of a drought (i.e. additional source augmentations), instead of reactionary measures, which have a higher risk profile. Preventative measures are more likely to mitigate Council's vulnerability to drought, thereby reducing the threshold severity of drought that may result in an emergency.

There is considered to be a limited role for temporary desalination in the later stages of drought. However, the potential implementation of temporary desalination should be considered in comparison to other potential drought response measures (both emergency and non-emergency). Rous's current Drought Management Plan allows for an adaptive approach, and it is suggested an adaptive rather than prescriptive approach is applied to temporary desalination. The Report provides information which can be used to make comparisons to other options and inform the adaptive approach adopted by Council when experiencing drought conditions.

### **Conclusion – Permanent Desalination**

The feasibility of a permanent desalination plant has been investigated and the Report provides additional information about potential site locations, including constraints. The Report provides updated cost estimates for desalination which are significantly higher than previously estimated. At these cost estimate ranges, desalination does not compare favourably to previously costed groundwater and surface water alternatives. This reinforces the views previously indicated in the Future Water Project<sup>Error! Bookmark not defined.</sup>, that desalination is not considered an attractive economic option when compared to conventional alternatives.

As part of the next update to Rous's Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy (IWCM), a detailed comparison will be made, which will incorporate the learnings from the Report.

### **Attachment**

1. *Desalination Options Assessment - Final Report – Beca HunterH<sub>2</sub>O – June 2024*  
<https://rous.nsw.gov.au/page.asp?f=RES-EQQ-20-04-75>

## Revised Workplace Surveillance policy

Responsible Officer: Group Manager Organisational Services (Helen McNeil)

### Recommendation

That Council:

1. Revoke the Workplace Surveillance Policy adopted by Rous Water on 17 June 2015 and the former Richmond River County Council and Far North Coast County Council on 22 June 2015, and any policy revived as a result of the revocation; and
2. Approve the revised Workplace Surveillance Policy attached.

### Background

New South Wales is one of only a few jurisdictions in Australia that has enacted legislation regulating surveillance in the workplace - the *Workplace Surveillance Act 2005 (NSW)* ('WS Act').

Under the WS Act, Council is permitted to place under surveillance its employees, contractors and volunteers while they are at work<sup>1</sup> by using computer, camera or tracking surveillance.

The WS Act establishes various additional requirements, such as notice<sup>2</sup> and signage<sup>3</sup> requirements, on the use of particular types of surveillance devices and the circumstances in which surveillance information or records can lawfully be used or disclosed<sup>4</sup>.

Council has had in place a workplace surveillance program since 2015, including a [Workplace Surveillance policy](#) and a Workplace Surveillance procedure adopted by the three separate county councils (Rous Water, Far North Coast Weeds and Richmond River County Council) prior to their amalgamation into the current day Rous County Council.

As part of Council's normal review practices, an updated policy and procedure have now been developed to reflect legislative responsibilities and contemporary business processes/needs, and internal policy standards.

### Key Changes – Revised Workplace Surveillance Policy

The substance of the revised Workplace Surveillance Policy ([Attachment 1](#)) remains the same as the existing policy, being that Council remains committed to operating its workplace surveillance program in conformance with the requirements of the WS Act and other applicable legislation.<sup>5</sup>

Provisions of the policy which duplicated provisions of the WS Act have been removed from the revised policy. Similarly, matters deemed operational in nature have been removed from the policy and incorporated into a revised Workplace Surveillance procedure. This has resulted in a more consolidated policy document.

The roles and responsibilities currently set out in the existing policy are an example of operational provisions that have been incorporated into the revised Workplace Surveillance procedure.

<sup>1</sup> Meaning of "at work" is set out in section [5](#) *Workplace Surveillance Act 2005 (NSW)*.

<sup>2</sup> See section [10](#) *Ibid*.

<sup>3</sup> For example, see sections [11\(b\)](#) and [13](#) *Ibid*.

<sup>4</sup> Section [18](#) *Ibid*.

<sup>5</sup> For example, the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)* and the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)*.

The review frequency has also been changed from 2-yearly under the existing policy, to 4-yearly under the revised policy to reflect the regular policy review cycle adopted at Council and in recognition of the long-term operation of the workplace surveillance program.

None of the updates made to the revised policy (and revised procedure) fundamentally change the status quo of the current workplace surveillance program, including the type of surveillance operated (i.e. camera, computer, and tracking surveillance) and who is being subjected to the surveillance.

### **Governance**

- **Finance**

Expenses associated with the implementation and maintenance of surveillance devices under the workplace surveillance program are typically met within existing budget allocations assigned to the relevant business area with responsibility for that component of the program.

- **Legal**

The revised Workplace Surveillance Policy and the Workplace Surveillance Procedure have been drafted with due regard to the provisions of the WS Act.

### **Consultation**

The Leadership Group and Leadership Team, together with other internal stakeholders with workplace surveillance roles or responsibilities, have been provided the opportunity of contributing to the development of the revised Workplace Surveillance policy. The revised policy was also provided to Council's Consultative Committee and no feedback conveyed or amendments requested.

### **Conclusion**

The revised Workplace Surveillance Policy complements the statutory requirements established by the WS Act in relation to the operation of Council's workplace surveillance program and brings up-to-date Council's purpose and priorities in maintaining this program.

It is recommended that the existing Workplace Surveillance Policy adopted in 2015 by the three separate counties be revoked and the revised Workplace Surveillance Policy be approved by Council.

### **Attachment**

1. Revised Workplace surveillance policy (for **approval**)

# Policy



## Workplace surveillance

Approved by Council: xx/xx/xxxx

To set out the purpose and standards of management and use of workplace surveillance.

Safety

Teamwork

Accountability

Respect

### Background

Rous County Council (Council) operates a workplace surveillance program whereby surveillance of employees (including contractors and volunteers) is carried out while they are at work.

A workplace surveillance program has been in place since 2015 and operates in accordance with the requirements of the *Workplace Surveillance Act 2005 (NSW)* ('WS Act'), this policy and its related procedures associated documents.

This policy contains notice of Council's computer surveillance and workplace surveillance program, including the purpose and standards for the use and management of the surveillance information.

### Policy statement

- 1.1 Council's workplace surveillance program is ongoing and operates continuously, in accordance with the WS Act and for related purposes including:
  - (a) The protection and safety of Council's employees and assets;
  - (b) Improving service delivery, resource planning, and utilisation of Council assets;
  - (c) Monitoring environmental impacts of Council activities;
  - (d) Detecting, investigating, verifying and reporting on incidents, complaints, claims, wrongdoing and breaches of Council policy and procedure at work;
  - (e) To assist law enforcement and emergency services respond to situations of concern and to assist in the prosecution of criminal matters.
- 1.2 The following types of surveillance are used and operated:
  - 1.2.1 Camera surveillance
  - 1.2.2 Computer surveillance
  - 1.2.3 Tracking surveillance.

### Prohibited Surveillance

- 1.3 Council's workplace surveillance program does not include or extend to surveillance:
  - 1.3.1 In any change room, toilet facility, shower or lunchroom at any Council premises.



- 1.3.2 When an employee is not at work - excluding computer surveillance of devices (including but not limited to telephones and laptops) provided by or at Council's expense.
- 1.3.3 By way of listening device<sup>1</sup> - Council will take all reasonable steps to ensure any audio capability of its surveillance hardware or software is disabled.

### Computer surveillance

- 1.4 All emails, whether incoming or outgoing, internet traffic, and computer use are subject to monitoring on a continuous basis.
- 1.5 The detection of the below type of computer use may result in disciplinary or other action being taken in accordance with the Workplace Surveillance procedure:
  - 1.5.1 Contains malicious code or otherwise creates an opportunity for a cyber-attack/incident; or
  - 1.5.2 Is reasonably regarded as being, in all the circumstances, menacing, harassing, inappropriate or offensive, or
  - 1.5.3 May or does result in an unauthorised disclosure of information and/or interference with the operation of a Council computer, computer network, or of any program run by or data stored on such a computer or computer network, or
  - 1.5.4 Contravenes any Council policy, procedure, business rules or legislative obligations.

### Access, Use and Disclosure of surveillance information

- 1.6 Surveillance information that is, or contains, personal information will be handled in accordance with the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (NSW) (PIIP Act) and Council's Privacy policy and Privacy Management Plan.
- 1.7 Access to surveillance information by third parties may only be sought and granted in accordance with the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (NSW), PIIP Act, and/or as otherwise permitted by law.
- 1.8 Internal access and use of surveillance information by Council will occur in accordance with its Workplace Surveillance procedure and any applicable legislative or industrial relations requirements.

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<sup>1</sup> This type of surveillance is prohibited unless one of the exceptions outlined in the Surveillance Devices Act 2007 (NSW) applies.

## Definitions

<b>At work</b>	Has the same meaning as in section 5 of the WS Act (as amended) – <i>“An employee is <b>at work</b> for an employer when the employee is:  (a) At a workplace of the employer (or a related corporation of the employer) whether or not the employee is actually performing work at the time, or  (b) At any other place while performing work for the employer (or a related corporation of the employer)”.</i> This includes, for example, employees working from home.
<b>Camera surveillance</b>	Surveillance by means of a camera including an electronic device capable of monitoring or recording visual images of activities on premises or in any other place.
<b>Computer</b>	Anything with electronic processing capacity including, but not limited to, computers, laptops, tablets and mobile phones.
<b>Computer surveillance</b>	Surveillance by means of software or other equipment that monitors or records the information input or output, or other use, of a computer (including, but not limited to, the sending and receipts of emails and the accessing of internet websites).
<b>Notice</b>	Is written notice (which may be by way of an email) that sets out: (c) The kind of surveillance to be carried out (camera, computer or tracking), and (d) How the surveillance will be carried out, and (e) When the surveillance will start, and (f) Whether the surveillance will be continuous or intermittent, and (g) Whether the surveillance will be for a specified limited period or ongoing.
<b>Personal information</b>	Has the meaning set out in the PPIP Act and is information or an opinion (including information or an opinion forming part of a database and whether or not recorded in a material form) about an individual whose identity is apparent or can reasonably be ascertained from the information or opinion.
<b>Surveillance information</b>	Is information obtained, recorded, monitored or observed as a consequence of surveillance undertaken as part of Council’s Workplace Surveillance Program.
<b>Tracking surveillance</b>	Surveillance by means of an electronic device which is capable of monitoring or recording geographical location or movement (such as Global Positioning System (‘GPS’) tracking device).
<b>Workplace surveillance program</b>	Anything related to or connected with undertaking workplace surveillance including surveillance information, this policy, Workplace Surveillance Procedure and any supporting equipment, technology, records and information, but <b>does not</b> include: (a) Health monitoring undertaken in connection with Council’s health monitoring program; or (b) Drug and alcohol testing undertaken in connection with Council’s drug and alcohol testing program; or (c) Surveillance by means of a listening device.

**Contact officer**

Governance and Risk Manager

**Related documents****Policies**[Code of Conduct](#)[Cyber Security](#)[Privacy](#)[Risk Management](#)[Work Health Safety](#)**Procedures**[Data Breach Plan](#)[Privacy Management Plan](#)[Motor vehicles conditions of use for road registered motor vehicles](#)[Workplace surveillance](#)**Legislation***Workplace Surveillance Act 2005 (NSW)**Surveillance Devices Act 2007 (NSW)**Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)**Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)**Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW)*

<b>Office use only</b>	File no.: D21/5296	Next review date: 4 years	
Version	Purpose and description	Date adopted by Council	Resolution no.

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## People and Culture policies (reviewed)

*Responsible Officer: Group Manager – Transformation and Strategy (Geoff Ward)*

*Report Author: People and Change Transformation Lead (Priscilla Carswell)*

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### Recommendation

1. Re-adopt the Human Resources – Employment Conditions Policy dated 20 October 2021 without change.
2. Re-adopt the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Management Plan dated 19 April 2017 with updated schedule and dates.

### Background

The Human Resources – Employment Conditions Policy was last reviewed in 2021, while the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Policy was last reviewed in 2017. Both policies have a 2-year review frequency and are overdue for review.

#### 1. Human Resources – Employment Conditions Policy

The review of the Human Resources – Employment Conditions Policy confirmed its relevance and effectiveness in outlining core employment conditions. The policy supports benefits, promotes flexibility, and upholds the values of Rous as an employer of choice. It is recommended that this policy be re-adopted without changes, as it remains valid and effective in its current form.

#### 2. Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

Upon review, the EEO Policy remains relevant. However, although the goals in the EEO Management Plan are still pertinent, the dates and assigned owners need updating. Therefore, it is recommended to retain the EEO Policy and revise the EEO Management Plan to include updated schedules and current ownership details. This will ensure that Rous' EEO initiatives continue to be effective and timely.

### Governance

- **Finance**

Not applicable.

- **Legal**

The policies have been reviewed and updated having regard to relevant legislation and industrial instruments.

### Consultation

Consultation has been undertaken with key stakeholders, including the Leadership Team, Leadership Group, and the People and Culture team. Feedback has been positive and supportive of the proposed changes. The revised policies were not referred to the Consultative Committee due to the minor and inconsequential nature of the proposed changes.

**Conclusion**

The Human Resources – Employment Conditions Policy and the EEO Policy have been reviewed. It is proposed that the Human Resources – Employment Conditions Policy be re-adopted without change and that the EEO Policy be re-adopted with minor changes.

**Attachments:**

1. Human Resources – Employment Conditions Policy (proposed re-adoption without change)
2. Equal Employment Opportunity Policy (revised)
3. Equal Employment Opportunity Policy (original policy)

# Policy



## Human Resources – employment conditions

Approved by Council: 20/10/2021

This policy outlines essential human resources conditions at Council, to complement the *Local Government (State) Award*.

Safety

Teamwork

Accountability

Respect

### Background

The *Local Government (State) Award* (the 'Award') is the principal industrial instrument that regulates the employment conditions and entitlements of Council staff.

In addition to the minimum entitlements set out in the Award, Council may provide its staff with more favourable or complementary employment entitlements and practices. These additional entitlements and practices are set out in this policy to provide certainty and consistent application to all current and prospective Council staff.

### Policy statement

To improve its ability to attract, develop and retain a diverse workforce, Council adopts and applies the following supplementary employment entitlements and practices –

#### 1. Nine-day fortnight

All full-time staff are entitled to participate in a rostered day off ('RDO') system of working hours, granting one working day per fortnight absence on accumulated time.

Council's customer service levels will not be diminished or affected by the participation of staff in the nine-day fortnight arrangement.

#### 2. Flexible Working Arrangements

All directly appointed Council staff regardless of employment status or tenure have the right to request Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA).

The eligibility criteria for FWA set out under the National Employment Standards and the Award will not limit the rights of Council staff under this policy.

Regard will be had to Council's operational obligations to ensure they are not diminished, prior to approving FWA.

FWA for labour hire staff must be negotiated and agreed with the appointing third-party agency.

#### 3. Salary System

Council endorses the Salary System requirements of the *Local Government (State) Award* which provides for a Salary System that sets out the system, design rules and salary structure applicable for all staff (excluding the General Manager).

#### 4. Progression Steps

Each position within Council, excluding the position of General Manager, is assigned a salary grade equivalent to the entry level rates of pay for the corresponding skill descriptor (band) under the Award.

In accordance with clause (ii) of Part 7 of the Award, the Salary System shall have a structure that complements the entry level rates of pay and skill descriptors in the Award by identifying grades. Each grade shall have a minimum entry level and four (4) skill steps that exceed the entry level rates of pay. Progression through the skill steps is based on the acquisition and use of skills, staff performance and/or achievement of performance objectives.

Salary increase on attainment of each skill step is calculated in accordance with the percentages outlined below:

Grade	Entry	Skill Step 1	Skill Step 2	Skill Step 3	Skill Step 4	Total Spread
1 to 21	Award and Salary System minimum	5%	4%	3%	4%	16%

**Contact officer**

People and Culture Manager

**Related documents**

**Policies**

N/A

**Procedures**

Human Resources Procedures Handbook  
Flexible Working Arrangements Guide

**Legislation**

*Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)*  
*Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)*

**Other**

*Local Government (State) Award*

<i>Office use only</i>	File no.: F20/324-01	Next review date: 2 years	
Version	Purpose and description	Date adopted by Council	Resolution no.
1.0	Replacement to supersede 10 previous policies revoked at the 21/08/2019 Council meeting.	21/08/2019	60/19
2.0	Replaces policy dated 21/08/2019 and introduces new provision for flexible work arrangements	20/10/2021	55/21



# Policy

## Equal Employment Opportunity

Approved by Council:

To ensure compliance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1993* and to outline Council' commitment to ensuring our workplace is free of discrimination and supports a diverse workforce.

Safety

Teamwork

Accountability

Respect

### Policy statement

Rous County Council (Council) is committed to ensuring our workplace is free of discrimination and that equal employment principles are at the foundation of how we operate. A well-managed diverse workforce will equip the organisation to meet future challenges in a competent and innovative manner.

Council aims to have a diverse workforce; employing workers from a wide range of backgrounds. This includes workers of different ages, gender, ethnicity, physical ability, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, work experience and educational background. Council commits to ensure that all recruitment and employment decisions are merit-based and adhere to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) requirements.

This policy has been developed in accordance with the *Equal Employment Opportunity Act 1987*, *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977* and *Local Government Act 1993*.

### EEO principles

All employees and potential employees have the right to equality of opportunity and fair treatment in employment.

Employees shall not receive less favourable treatment due to personal or vocational attributes such as age, gender, ethnicity, physical ability, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, work experience and educational background.

Council supports and encourages a diverse workforce reflective of the diversity of the community it serves. It commits to implementing business processes that remove systemic barriers to the participation and promotion in employment of EEO groups such as:

- Women
- Aboriginal People and Torres Strait Islanders
- People from racial, ethnic and ethno-religious minority groups
- People whose language first spoken as a child was not English
- People with a disability
- People with a disability requiring adjustment at work, and
- Carers

In addition, Council has a trained EEO Contact Officer to provide support and advice to both employees and management. The duties of this position include:

- providing a neutral contact point for concerned workers
- informing supervisors, and the Leadership Team of complaints, current issues, and emerging issues
- providing support and information throughout the complaints handling process.



## **Discrimination**

Council does not tolerate any form of discrimination.

EEO principles are underpinned by practices that fulfil the requirements of the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977*. These include practices that ensure discrimination (of an employee or job applicant) does not occur. This means that employees of Council and/or applicants will not be discriminated against based on attributes including: gender; parental status; race; impairment; age; sexuality, political or religious belief.

### ***Direct discrimination***

Treating people in similar circumstances differently, because of irrelevant characteristics or attributes or because of assumptions about the individual or group. Examples of such are:

- denying a person a job because they are over 45
- overlooking a person for management training because of their nationality.

### ***Indirect discrimination***

Treating people unreasonably based on requirements which cannot be met by most members of a particular group. Examples include:

- promotion by seniority thus excluding many women because they have taken time out of the workforce to care for children
- employing workers based on their height, although height is not pertinent to effective performance of the job.

## **Complaints**

Council takes matters relating to EEO very seriously and encourages employees and or job applicants to report potential breaches. In the first instance this may involve raising the matter directly with the person involved. If this is not practicable and/or does not resolve the matter, a formal written complaint can be lodged: [Feedback and Complaints form](#)

## **EEO policy goals**

The Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policy is aligned with the [Workforce Management Plan](#) to support our goal of becoming a regional employer of choice. It focuses on recruiting diverse talent, integrating EEO principles into training, and fostering a supportive culture, thereby reinforcing the Plan's objectives of leadership development, investing in our workplace, improving our employee experience and workplace change. This alignment ensures a strategic and integrated approach, as detailed in Appendix 1, where the specific, achievable actions and measures are outlined to ensure meaningful progress and effective implementation.

## Appendix 1

What we are going to do?	Who is accountable for making this happen?	When will it occur?
<b>GOAL 1: Policies, procedures and practices consistent with EEO principles, legislation and guidelines</b>		
<b>Measure: Evidence of EEO principles, legislation and guidelines in policies, procedures and practices</b>		
Review and update (where necessary) people related policies and procedures	People and Culture Manager	According to review cycle
Consider the needs of EEO groups in work reorganisation or structural changes	Leadership Team People and Culture Manager	As required
<b>GOAL 2: Recruit and select a diverse workforce based on sound EEO principles</b>		
<b>Measure: Workforce that is representative of our community</b>		
All recruitment and selection activities promote and comply with EEO principles (e.g. procedures, processes, position descriptions, advertising, representative selection panels, terms and conditions)	Hiring manager, People and Culture Business Partner	Ongoing
^Document and promote the employee value proposition (EVP) – including an EEO statement	People and Culture Manager	FY 2025/2026
^Establish an apprenticeship/graduate program targeting EEO groups	People and Culture Manager	FY 2025/2026
<b>GOAL 3: Embed EEO objectives, requirements, and responsibilities into training and development activities</b>		
<b>Measure: Evidence that training programs have EEO components or are based on EEO principles</b>		
^All new employees are made aware of EEO objectives, requirements and responsibilities as part of the induction process	All supervisors/managers People and Culture Manager	Ongoing
^Succession plans are reviewed using EEO principles	Leadership Team	Annually
^Management training programs to include module(s) related to EEO principles and practices	People and Culture Manager	Ongoing
All employees to undertake “refresher” training to maintain currency of EEO principles and practices	People and Culture Officer	Every 2 years
<b>GOAL 4: Engage in regular EEO related communication with employees (supported by our EEO data)</b>		
<b>Measure: Evidence of regular communication with employees and Senior Management Team</b>		
Use multiple communication channels to support the release of policies and procedures	People and Culture Manager	As required
^Promote and celebrate EEO achievements through channels including Staff Forums, Rous Connect and Rewards and Recognition Program	General Manager All Employees	Ongoing
^Analyse and report on our EEO workforce data to the SMT as part of the workforce planning cycles	People and Culture Officer	Annually
<b>GOAL 5: Create a workplace culture, aligned to our values which support EEO practices</b>		
<b>Measure: Majority of employees understand their EEO responsibilities and demonstrate appropriate behaviours</b>		
^Performance conversations include behaviours that support our values and EEO principles	All Supervisors/Managers	Ongoing
^ Seek feedback from employees (around EEO practices) by including EEO questions in engagement surveys	People and Culture Manager	Ongoing

Key: ^ Initiative from the Rous Workforce Management Plan 2022-2025

**Contact officer**

People and Culture Manager

**Related documents****Policies**

Code of Conduct

**Procedures**

Bullying and Harassment procedure.

Complaints Handling procedure.

**Legislation***Local Government Act 1993.**Equal Employment Opportunity Act 1987.**Anti-Discrimination Act 1977.***Other**

Code of Conduct procedures.

[Feedback and Complaints form](#)

Workforce Management Plan.

<b>Office use only</b>	File no.: F20/324-01	Next review date: 2 years	
Version	Purpose and description	Date adopted by Council	Resolution no.
1.0	Equal Employment Opportunity policy.	19/04/2017	32/17
2.0	Updated to reflect new EEO goals and objectives of workforce management plan 2022-2025	TBC	TBC

# Policy



## Equal Employment Opportunity

Approved by Council: 19 April 2017

To ensure compliance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1993* and to outline Council's commitment to ensuring our workplace is free of discrimination and supports a diverse workforce.

Safety

Teamwork

Accountability

Respect

### Policy statement

Rous County Council (Council) is committed to ensuring our workplace is free of discrimination and that equal employment principles are at the foundation of how we operate.

Equal opportunity in employment includes the principles of selection, training, transfer, promotion, terms of employment and dismissal in a fair, equitable, consistent manner without unlawful bias or prejudice.

Council aims to have a diverse workforce; employing workers from a wide range of backgrounds. This includes workers of different ages, gender, ethnicity, physical ability, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, work experience and educational background.

Council will endeavour to ensure that in the application of all Council policies, practices and procedures, no discrimination takes place, diversity is encouraged, and that all employees enjoy equal access to opportunities within the Council. All recruitment, selection and employment decisions will be based on the individual merit of applicants and employees.

A well-managed diverse workforce will equip the organisation to meet future challenges in a competent and innovative manner.

### Background

The Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) principle is that all employees and potential employees have the right to equality of opportunity and fair treatment in employment.

The EEO policy (EEO policy) has been developed in accordance with the *Equal Employment Opportunity Act 1987*, *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977* and *Local Government Act 1993*. This policy also supports the delivery of our Workforce Management Plan – through a focus on EEO outcomes.

The EEO policy facilitates the identification and removal of systemic barriers to the participation and promotion in employment of EEO groups, including:

- Women
- Aboriginal People and Torres Strait Islanders
- People from racial, ethnic and ethno-religious minority groups
- People whose language first spoken as a child was not English
- People with a disability
- People with a disability requiring adjustment at work, and
- Carers

This EEO policy has been designed to enable Council to build on and improve its performance in establishing and maintaining a diverse workforce which reflects the diversity of the greater community. The policy is Council's foundation for a working environment that values diversity and promotes equity and inclusion. Council also believes an inclusive workplace provides a quality working environment for employees and gives Council the competitive edge in the employment market.

Supporting the achievement of this EEO policy are Council's various policies, procedures and other documents listed in the 'Related documents'.

In addition, Council has a trained EEO Contact Officer to provide support and advice to both employees and management. The duties of this position include:

- providing a neutral contact point for workers with concerns in relation to discrimination, harassment or EEO issues in the workplace
- informing the supervisors, and the Senior Management Team of all EEO complaints, issues and potential issues in the workplace, and
- providing support and information to the complainant on the procedural options available to resolve a complaint.

### **Discrimination**

EEO principles are underpinned by practices that fulfil the requirements of the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977*. These include practices that ensure discrimination (of an employee or job applicant) does not occur. This means people who work for Council and/or apply for a job with Council will not be discriminated against based on attributes including: gender; parental status; race; impairment; age; sexuality political or religious belief. Council therefore does not tolerate any form of discrimination.

### **Direct discrimination**

Treating people in similar circumstances differently, because of irrelevant characteristics or attributes or because of assumptions about the individual or group. Examples of such are:

- denying a person a job because they are over 45
- overlooking a person for management training because of their nationality.

### **Indirect discrimination**

Treating people unreasonably based on requirements, which cannot be met by most members of a particular group. Examples of such are:

- promotion by seniority thus excluding many women because they have taken time out of the workforce to care for children
- employing workers based on their height, although height is not pertinent to effective performance of the job
- anyone who engages in unacceptable conduct in breach of EEO may face disciplinary action.

## Complaints

Council takes matters relating to EEO very seriously and encourages employees and or job applicants to report potential breaches of EEO principles. In the first instance this may involve raising the matter directly with the person involved. If this is not practicable and/or does not resolve the matter, a formal written complaint can be lodged. Current employees can use the 'Complaint – feedback' form available on our intranet.

External parties can write to the General Manager. This written complaint should include:

- a detailed statement of the conduct, events, dates and times
- the name of the person/s the complaint is made against
- names of any witnesses
- any attempt to resolve the issue and the outcome of the attempt including information about the desired outcome sought

If the complaint relates to the General Manager please refer to Council's Code of Conduct (available on our website – [www.rous.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rous.nsw.gov.au)).

The complaint will be investigated and the complainant will receive written advice of the outcome of this investigation.

Where the matter can't be resolved internally, people have the right to lodge a complaint with the relevant body. This includes the Anti- Discrimination Board of NSW [website address](#)

## Reporting, review, evaluation and revision

This EEO policy is a dynamic document that will be reviewed annually to ensure it continues to meet the identified goals while remaining compliant with relevant legislation.

Following the review, the EEO policy may be amended to reflect the changing nature of business and the environment in which we operate. We will report on implementation of the EEO policy through the Annual Report.

## EEO policy goals

Our EEO policy supports the delivery of the Workforce Management Plan and supports Council's aim to be regional employer of choice. The goals of our EEO policy are aligned to the objectives of the Workforce Management Plan and targeted to EEO outcomes. The Workforce Management Plan objectives that directly align with this policy are: attracting a diverse workforce; investing in skill development; engaging with our employees and supporting them to maximise their full potential.

The Workforce Management Plan objectives underpin our EEO policy goals ensuring we have an integrated and strategic approach. The EEO policy goals are:

1. Policies, procedures and practices are consistent with EEO principles, legislation and guidelines.
2. Recruit and select a diverse workforce based on sound EEO principles.
3. Embed EEO objectives, requirements, and responsibilities into training and development activities.

4. Engage in regular EEO related communication with employees (supported by our EEO data).
5. Create a workplace culture, aligned to our values which support EEO practices.

Appendix 1 details the actions we will undertake to achieve these goals and the measures we will use. These actions have been designed to be:

- Achievable
- Meaningful and genuinely make a difference
- Readily understood
- Capable of assessment.

What we are going to do?	Who is accountable for making this happen?	When will it occur?
<b>GOAL 1: Policies, procedures and practices consistent with EEO principles, legislation and guidelines</b>		
<b>Measure: Evidence of EEO principles, legislation and guidelines in policies, procedures and practices</b>		
Review and update (where necessary) people related policies and procedures	HR Coordinator	According to review cycle
Consider the needs of EEO groups in work reorganisation or structural changes	Senior Management Team	As required
<b>GOAL 2: Recruit and select a diverse workforce based on sound EEO principles</b>		
<b>Measure: Workforce that is representative of our community</b>		
All recruitment and selection activities promote and comply with EEO principles (e.g. procedures, processes, position descriptions, advertising, representative selection panels, terms and conditions)	Hiring manager/supervisor	Ongoing
^Document and promote the employee value proposition (EVP) – including an EEO statement	HR Coordinator	March 2019
^Establish an apprenticeship/graduate program targeting EEO groups	Senior Management Team	December 2018
<b>GOAL 3: Embed EEO objectives, requirements, and responsibilities into training and development activities</b>		
<b>Measure: Evidence that training programs have EEO components or are based on EEO principles</b>		
^All new employees are made aware of EEO objectives, requirements and responsibilities as part of the induction process	All supervisors/managers	Ongoing
^Succession plans are reviewed using EEO principles	Senior Management Team	Annually
^Management training programs to include module(s) related to EEO principles and practices	Senior Management Team	By September 2018
All employees to undertake “refresher” training to maintain currency of EEO principles and practices	HR Officer	Every 2 years
<b>GOAL 4: Engage in regular EEO related communication with employees (supported by our EEO data)</b>		
<b>Measure: Evidence of regular communication with employees and Senior Management Team</b>		
Use multiple communication channels to support the release of policies and procedures	HR Coordinator	As required
^Promote and celebrate EEO achievements through channels including Staff Forums and Rous Connect	General Manager	As required
^Analyse and report on our EEO workforce data to the SMT as part of the workforce planning cycles	HR Coordinator	Annually
<b>GOAL 5: Create a workplace culture, aligned to our values which support EEO practices</b>		
<b>Measure: Majority of employees understand their EEO responsibilities and demonstrate appropriate behaviours</b>		
^Performance conversations include behaviours that support our values and EEO principles	All supervisors/managers	Ongoing
^ Seek feedback from employees (around EEO practices) by including EEO questions in engagement surveys	Senior Management Team	Ongoing

Key: ^ Initiative from the Rous Workforce Management Plan 2017 - 2021



**Contact officer**

Human Resources Coordinator

**Related documents****Policies**

Complaints Handling policy.

**Procedures**

Bullying and Harassment procedure.

Complaints Handling procedure.

**Legislation***Local Government Act 1993.**Equal Employment Opportunity Act 1987.**Anti-Discrimination Act 1977.***Other**

Code of Conduct.

Code of Conduct procedures.

Complaint - feedback form.

Workforce Management Plan 2017 – 2021.

<b>Office use only</b>	File no.: 172/13	Next review date: 2 years	
Version	Purpose and description	Date adopted by Council	Resolution no.
1.0	Equal Employment Opportunity policy.	19/04/2017	32/17

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## Information reports

*Responsible Officer: General Manager and Group Managers*

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### **Recommendation**

That the following information reports be received and noted:

1. Rous Regional Demand Management Plan 2023-2024: Annual report
2. Tenders awarded by the General Manager under Delegation
3. Temporary Water Allocation for the Nimbin supply
4. Investments – July 2024
5. Retail Water Customer Account Assistance Information Report
6. Water production and usage – July 2024
7. Retail Water Debt Write-off Information report
8. Delivery program | Operational plan result for year ending 30 June 2024
9. Reports/Actions pending

### **Background**

Copies of the abovementioned reports are attached for information.

### **Consultation**

The reports have been prepared in consultation with the General Manager, relevant Group Managers and staff.

### **Attachments**

1. Information reports 1-9

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## Rous Regional Demand Management Plan 2023-2024: Annual report

*Responsible Officer: Group Manager Planning and Delivery (Andrew Logan)*

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### Recommendation

That Council receive and note the progress of demand management deliverables for the 2023-2024 financial year including budget expenditure

### Background

The Regional Demand Management Plan (RDMP) describes the water supply demand management initiatives to be implemented by Rous County Council over a four-year period (2023 - 2026). The RDMP continues to deliver comprehensive water conservation programs throughout the region for both residential and non-residential users. The aim of the RDMP is to implement economically, socially and environmentally sound measures to achieve defined outcomes in water efficiency and conservation over the long term.

A key achievement in 2023/2024 was the successful completion of a region-wide standard definitions of connection types and the region-wide water supply connection policy and guidelines undertaken by Hydrosphere Consulting, with all constituent councils providing in-principal support. A key outcome of the water supply connection policy is that all new connections are individually metered. Once fully adopted and implemented by Rous and constituent councils, the data from the standard definitions of connection types will contribute to enhanced collection, evaluation and reporting, assisting in achieving greater effectiveness in demand management and provide meaningful information on the results achieved.

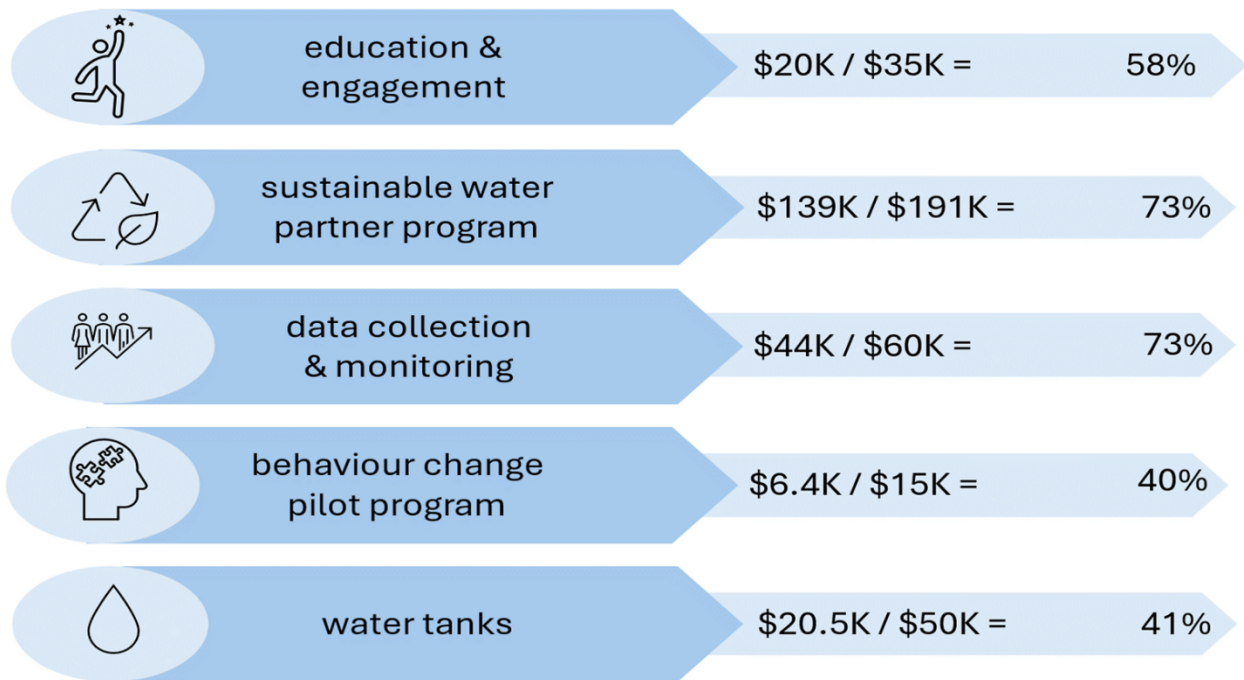
Our Regional Water Education Officer has broadened the reach of the water sustainability education program through engaging presentations and collaborations with schools, environmental organisations and libraries. The Australian curriculum was mapped to determine areas of overlap with Rous's key water sustainability messages and to guide the development of further educational opportunities. Presentations were met with enthusiasm, generating positive feedback and requests for future involvement. Complementary to this, a marketing campaign, utilising local media, social media, and community partnerships, significantly boosted participation in Water Night 2023.

A key challenge was the implementation of the Behaviour Change Pilot Program, which is designed to ensure sustained water efficiency behaviours for residential customers. A tender process in late October 2023 attracted one submission, and on assessment did not meet the objectives. Following a thorough evaluation process, it was decided to move forward with an internal staff member leading this initiative. This approach balances the expertise of external behaviour change specialists with the benefits of having a dedicated internal resource.

The natural disasters of 2022 have fostered a strong sense of community spirit, and we believe there is a high level of interest and willingness to participate in such programs that enhance community preparedness. A comprehensive delivery plan for the behaviour change program is underway, including identifying participants, gathering necessary educational materials, and scheduling initial community workshops. The program will be implemented during 2024/2025 and 2025/2026, with ongoing guidance and peer review from behaviour change experts.

## Budget

The image below shows expenditure against budget for 2023/2024.



Of particular note are the following:

- Education and Engagement Program (schools, community and residential program): advertising, social media, animation and educational resources.
- Sustainable Water Partner Program (non-residential program): If approved, carryover of the 2023-24 budget from the sustainable water partner program and the behaviour change pilot program will be used to fund the new position of a temporary community engagement officer to deliver these two programs until June 2026.
- Data collection and monitoring: The project was completed successfully and under budget.
- Behaviour Change Program (residential program): A comprehensive delivery plan is being prepared, including identifying participants, gathering necessary educational materials, and scheduling initial community workshops.
- Rainwater Tank Rebates Program (residential program): An underspend was experienced, reflecting customer demand. This is likely due to factors including current cost of living pressures and the very wet year.

A snapshot of actions under the RDMP for the 2023/2024 period as follows.

### Education and Engagement

- ◆ Presentations to 13 schools including collaborations with environmental based organisations.
- ◆ Delivery of community events including agricultural shows, university open day and a community river festival.
- ◆ Collaboration with local libraries across LGAs to present 7 school holiday activity sessions.
- ◆ Positive feedback received regarding presentation concept and content. *“Everyone loved it, the kids were able to get such a clearer understanding by seeing the flow and cause and effect”*



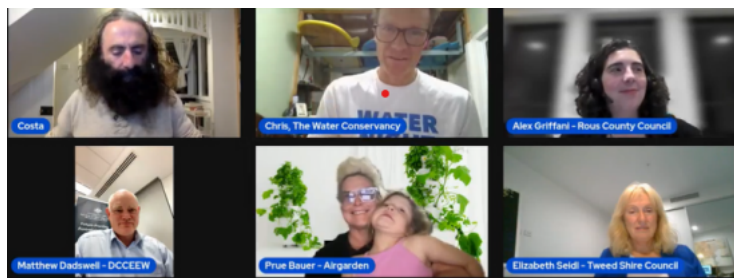
*Our very own Regional Water Education Officer, Alex Dowling second from the left, presenting at the Rivers Academy of STEM Excellence*



### Water Night 2023

- ◆ Impact: Increased national and local participation, improved water literacy, water behaviours and awareness.
- ◆ Media: Eleven social media posts; community service announcements; radio interviews; and Echo Newspaper articles.
- ◆ Rous employee photo competition with what-a-legend water saving tips.

*Water Night national broadcast with the Rous Regional Water Education Officer, Alex being interviewed by Costa Georgiadis.*



### Sustainable Water Partner Program



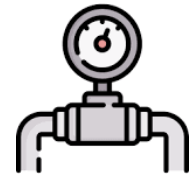
- ◆ Eight Reflections Holiday parks have completed water efficiency projects supported by program rebates. A case study is provided at the end of this report.
- ◆ 14 fully funded water audits were conducted, and water efficiency plans were provided to all businesses except for the Ballina Pool where there were limited options for achieving further water savings.
- ◆ Across the other 13 businesses, water efficiency projects identified potential water savings of over 11 million litres/year, the equivalent of almost 4.5 Olympic swimming pools each year. Rebates of \$30,200 were paid to four businesses.
- ◆ The Sustainable Water Partner Program was selected by industry leading water advisory group, The Water Conservancy, to feature in their inaugural e-newsletter and on the Smart Water Advice webpage at [Rous County Council Case Studies - Smart Water Advice](#)

### Rainwater Tank Rebate Program

% Applications by LGA	Lismore 59.1%	◆ 132,720L total tank volume
	Ballina 36.4%	◆ 22 approved applications
	Byron 4.5%	◆ 8 internal toilet connections
	Richmond 0%	◆ 6 laundry connections
		◆ Reduced applications overall and changed trends regarding % of applications by LGA (increase in Ballina and reduction in Byron and Richmond in particular)

### Smart metering

- ◆ The roll-out of smart metering is nearing completion with approximately 90% or 1900 smart meters being installed on customer services to the end of June 2024 with the remainder to be installed in July and August.
- ◆ Approximately 22% of customers have downloaded and are using the smart meter app to monitor their water usage and receive leak notifications.
- ◆ Council staff are using the smart meter data for leak detection and water loss management.



### Water loss management program

Council is taking a proactive approach to managing its water supply network by investing in training and new technologies.

- ◆ Our operational staff have completed DPI training in the key areas of non-revenue water management, pressure management and active leak control.
- ◆ We have acquired acoustic leak detection equipment that uses ground-level listening devices to pinpoint leaks in the water supply network. This will allow for faster and more targeted repairs.
- ◆ A flow control and pressure management valve (a first for Rous) has been purchased to regulate flow and pressure within the network. This will help to minimise pipe bursts and water loss.
- ◆ Nine bulk flow meters have been purchased to be installed at strategic points throughout the water network. These meters will provide real-time data on water flow, allowing staff to quickly identify leaks and expedite repairs, reducing overall water loss. A tender has been issued for the install of the meters.



## Water supply pricing

Rous County Council is currently assessing the option of a new consumption-based pricing model for its constituent councils. The proposed methodology will be run in parallel to the existing methodology for 18 months throughout 2024/2025 up until 31 December 2025, with the data to be provided to the constituent councils for further discussion. If adopted, the new methodology will provide further incentives to reduce water loss and usage.



### Attachment

1. Reflections Holidays – A sustainable water partner case study



## SUSTAINABLE WATER PARTNER PROGRAM



# Reflections Holidays – A Sustainable Water Partner

CASE STUDY



Reflections Holidays is a proud participant of Rous County Council's Sustainable Water Partner Program. Rous County Council has recognised Reflections for its commitment to water efficiency, achieving significant water savings as well as reducing their water bills.

### WATER SAVINGS IN THE TOURISM ACCOMMODATION SECTOR

In 2020-2024 Reflections Holidays (Reflections) in partnership with Rous County Council and specialist consultancy Websters Group embarked on a collaborative project to investigate town water consumption, associated costs and a range of measures available to improve water efficiency at eight holiday parks in the Northern Rivers, NSW.

The first phase of this project focused on data collection to understand where and how water was used. Information was gathered several ways: reviewing billing, occupancy and customer data; conducting an onsite walkthrough assessment and taking flow measurements; and analysing real-time water consumption data obtained through the installation of temporary smart water meters.

Collating and analysing water-use data enabled the immediate identification of water loss through leakage. It also gave insight into feasible water-saving projects and upgrades to enhance efficiency.

A comprehensive water saving plan was then developed to prioritise activities and water-saving projects that Reflections agreed were feasible, cost effective and capable of delivering water-saving benefits to reduce both their environmental footprint and future costs.

#### These projects included:

- Immediate resolution of costly leaks;
- Upgrading showers in male and female amenities to WELS-rated water efficient devices;
- Installing ongoing, permanent smart metering to detect water leaks long-term.

The water-saving plan identifying these projects was funded through Rous County Council's Sustainable Water Partner Program.

This work encompassed all levels of the Reflections business, from their Executive Team to individual Park Managers at eight sites between Brunswick Heads and Evans Head, stretching across Byron Bay, Ballina, and Richmond Valley Shires.




### PROJECTS & ACHIEVEMENTS – WATER EFFICIENCY AND COST SAVINGS

Preventing **water leaks** by installing smart metering

Upgrading  **330 SHOWER ROSES** to water efficient devices

A potential annual water saving of up to **8.9 million litres**

Over  **\$55,000** of potential annual savings in water, sewer, trade waste and energy consumption



**Achievements – Water efficiency & cost savings**

Locating and fixing leaks was an immediate focus of this project, generating significant water and cost savings. Acknowledging the importance of timely leak detection, Reflections have since installed permanent smart water meters at all sites across their NSW footprint.

Upgrading guest showers was another priority. Exploratory work took place to identify benefits, challenges and potential risks associated with any upgrades to shower head fittings. Extensive customer testing and feedback was gathered through a pilot project to determine the best options for a positive and water-efficient customer shower experience. The recommendations from this investigation led to the upgrade of 330 shower roses each at a 6.5 litre/minute 4 WELS Star flow rate. This is comparable to older style shower heads that can use up to 20 litres per minute.

On completion of these projects, a potential annual water saving of up to 8.9 million litres per year was achieved. The water saved was equivalent to almost four Olympic swimming pools, equating to more than \$55,000 of annual savings in water, sewer, trade waste and energy consumption.

Factoring the work cost and rebates available through the Sustainable Water Partner Program, a return on investment will be achieved in only one year.

Given the outcomes, there are plans for this project, focusing on water savings in the Northern Rivers, to be replicated at other Reflections parks across NSW. This rollout will see even greater long-term water savings achieved.

*This project was a catalyst for Reflections to enhance visibility of water consumption and potential losses at all of our holiday parks across NSW. The initial water efficiency investigations led to immediate actions as well as long-term projects that will not only reduce our water footprint but our energy consumption as well. This project aligns with Reflections' broader sustainability commitment to attain B Corp Certification (social, environmental, and governance best practice for business) by 2030.*

**Cameron Tynan, Reflections Executive Manager - Property Development & Planning**

*The Sustainable Water Partner program is an important contribution to firming regional water demand and securing our regional water supply. The project with Reflections is a leading example of testing water management options within a sample of sites and then applying learnings at scale.*

**Ryan Dillon, Websters Group, Managing Director**



**REFLECTIONS HOLIDAYS**

Reflections Holidays manages 40 holiday parks and 45 community reserves on NSW Crown Land. Reflections is committed to protecting and preserving sites under their management and seeks to incorporate water saving measures into various amenities and facilities as it builds on the sustainability focus of its business.

[www.reflectionsholidays.com.au](http://www.reflectionsholidays.com.au)



**ROUS COUNTY COUNCIL**

Rous County Council is the regional water supply authority providing bulk water to the Council areas of Ballina, Byron, Lismore Shires and the Evans Head area. We work closely with our constituent councils across these local government areas to deliver the Sustainable Water Partner Program in partnership with local businesses like Reflections Holidays.

[www.rous.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rous.nsw.gov.au)



**GET INVOLVED IN THE SUSTAINABLE WATER PARTNER PROGRAM**

The aim of the Sustainable Water Partner Program is to support businesses to make changes that will have lasting benefits for the business and broader community - not only saving water but increasing business profitability through lower water and sewer costs.

As part of the program, Rous County Council can offer local businesses support through planning and rebates to implement water saving projects. Contact Rous County Council for Terms and Conditions.

**THIS PROJECT IS REGIONALLY SUPPORTED BY**



Contact Rous County Council for eligibility details phone (02) 6623 3800 or email [council@rous.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@rous.nsw.gov.au)

This document was accurate at time of publication © Rous County Council 2024

## Tenders awarded by the General Manager under Delegation

*Responsible Officer: General Manager (Phillip Rudd)*

### Recommendation

That Council receive and note the information provided in this report on tenders accepted and contracts awarded by the General Manager under delegation during the period 1 April 2024 to 30 June 2024.

### Background

In August 2022, Council resolved [48/22] to increase its delegation to the General Manager for the acceptance and award of tenders and contracts valued up to \$1,000,000.00 and to receive ongoing information reports summarising details of these tenders/contracts awarded.

### Tenders/Contracts awarded under delegation by the General Manager for the period:

Tender/Contract	Start Date	Initial Value (Incl GST)	Contractors Name	Category
Construct New Switch Room – Night Cap Water Treatment Plant <sup>1</sup>	12/12/2023	\$297,323.53	O'Brien Electrical & Plumbing Lismore NSW	Construction

<sup>1</sup>Contracts register record originally entered incorrectly against Group Manager

### Governance

In accordance with clause 2(ii) of the Council issued delegation dated 17 August 2022:

(a) all expenditure or tenders/contracts approved by the General Manager must have a Council approved budget allocation available.

(b) only those tenders/contracts that comply with the applicable legislative tendering requirements may be approved by the General Manager.

### Comment

Where there has not been a tender accepted and contract awarded by the General Manager under delegation, no report will be furnished to Council.

### Conclusion

As required by resolution [48/22] this report is a summary of the tenders accepted and contracts awarded by the General Manager under delegation during the relevant reporting period.

## Temporary Allocation Assessment for the Nimbin Water Supply

*Responsible Officer: Group Manager Planning and Delivery (Andrew Logan)*

### Recommendation

That the report be received and noted.

### Background

Lismore City Council's (LCC's) water supply for the village of Nimbin is drawn from Mulgum Creek at a weir at the top of Gungas Road. This water is chlorinated and delivered by gravity to the D.E. Williams Dam located in Nimbin. The water is stored in the dam and is then treated, re-chlorinated and pumped to the Nimbin Reservoir, which reticulates drinking water to customers in Nimbin.

Recently, the D.E. Williams Dam required flushing to ensure acceptable water quality for the Nimbin water supply scheme. Typically, annual abstraction from Mulgum Creek is less than the 133 megalitre (ML) Water Access Licence (WAL) limit. However, to maintain required water quality targets, in the 23/24 financial year, LCC had abstracted over their licence allocation by approximately 280ML.

LCC was required to rectify this over abstraction of water, over the licence limit and Rous County Council's (Rous) Rocky Creek Dam (RCD) is the only WAL in the management zone with sufficient allocation to offset this shortfall in a single application.

LCC will be seeking to apply for a permanent increase to their water allocation for this supply scheme. However, advised received from NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEE) noted that the best short-term solution is to arrange for a temporary allocation assessment, formerly referred to as a temporary water transfer. LCC sought a temporary allocation assessment of 300 megalitres (ML) of water from Rous to address this issue.

Rous is required to obtain approval from NSW DCCEE for any temporary allocation. NSW DCCEE must be satisfied that any transfer will not jeopardise Rous's own compliance requirements. RCD's WAL is currently 11,800ML per year. Rous can run the risk of exceeding this limit when RCD remains over 95% full for extended periods of time over the financial year. This occurs in years where both the Wilson River and Emigrant Creek Dam sources are very rarely used.

Table 1 below forms a part of the approval process.

**Table 1 - Total annual extractions under the licence for the previous 5 years starting 1 July, and 23/24**

Year (1 July - 30 June)	Volume of water extracted (ML)
6 years ago (18/19)	10604
5 years ago (19/20)	10836
4 years ago (20/21)	10558
3 years ago (21/22)	10052
2 years ago (22/23)	10507
Last year (23/24)	10725

Based on the above information, and inclusive of the 300ML transfer to LCC, the RCD WAL has a 775ML allocation remaining for 23/24.

### **Governance**

- **Finance**

Given that the WALs held by both Councils are solely for the provision of town water supply and the impacts of the 2022 floods on the Nimbin supply, Rous did not seek compensation from LCC for the temporary allocation assessment. However, it is noted LCC was responsible for all costs (application fees and all other associated charges) associated with the application process.

- **Legal**

Due to the nature of the temporary allocation assessment, the Minister is required to consent to the application. The application has been lodged with the NSW DCCEEW and the outcome is not expected for some time.

The temporary allocation assessment process falls within the functions that is a part of specific delegations for the General Manager.

### **Consultation**

No consultation was required from this process.

### **Conclusion**

During the February 2022 natural disaster, approximately 4km of water main along Gungas Road, Nimbin was destroyed. This LCC water main was used to take water from the Mulgum Creek weir to the D.E. Williams Dam, which supplies the village of Nimbin with water. When the water main was destroyed, both LCC rural customers and the supply to D.E. Williams Dam were severely impacted.

As part of a flushing program to manage the water quality in D.E. Williams Dam, LCC has over drawn their water allocation from the weir on Mulgum Creek.

LCC has requested a one-off transfer from the Rous Water Access Licence (WAL) from RCD to the Nimbin WAL to address this shortfall in allocation. At the time of the discussions with LCC staff and based on Rous's need for water from RCD for the remainder of the 23/24 financial year, there was sufficient remaining allocation to support this request.

Given the issues that LCC had encountered, Rous did not seek compensation from LCC for this temporary allocation assessment.

## Investments July 2024

Responsible Officer: Group Manager Organisational Services (Helen McNeil)

### Recommendation

That Council receive and note the Investments for July 2024.

### Background

Clause 212 of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* ('Regulation') and Council's 'Investments' policy require that a report detailing Council's investments be provided to each ordinary Council meeting. This report has been prepared as at 31 July 2024.

### Finance Report

BANK ACCOUNT SUMMARY	TOTAL
<b>Cheque Account Balance</b>	\$766,431
<b>Weel Account Balance</b> – Cuscal Ltd (Pre-paid Corporate Cards)	\$49,350
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$816,081</b>

INVESTMENT SUMMARY	TOTAL
<b>Business Online Saver Account Balance</b>	\$5,032,220
<b>Term Deposits with Institutions not supporting the Fossil Fuel Industry</b>  <i>The assessment of Ethical Financial Institutions is undertaken using <a href="http://www.marketforces.org.au">www.marketforces.org.au</a> which is an affiliate project of the Friends of the Earth Australia (Refer: Graph D4 - Attachment D).</i>	\$2,500,000  7.80% of current holdings
<b>Other Term Deposits</b>	\$24,500,000
<b>Total Funds Invested</b>  <i>Excluding Cheque Account and Weel Balance</i>	<b>\$32,032,220</b>

OTHER INVESTMENT INFORMATION	TOTAL
<p><b>Interest Earned</b></p> <p><i>Interest earned compared to the original budget is \$20,448 above the pro-rata budget. (Refer: Attachment A).</i></p>	\$139,523
<p><b>Weighted Average Return</b></p> <p><i>This represents an increase of 12 basis point compared from the June 2024 result (4.56%) and is 23 basis points above Council's benchmark (the average 90-day BBSW rate of 4.45%) (Refer: Graph D2 - Attachment D).</i></p>	4.68%
<p><b>RBA Cash Rate</b></p>	4.48%
<p><b>The 90-day average bank bill swap rate (BBSW)</b></p>	4.45%

At the RBA's 18<sup>th</sup> June 2024 meeting the board decided to leave the cash rate unchanged at 4.35%.

The economic outlook remains uncertain and recent data have demonstrated that the process of returning inflation to target is unlikely to be smooth. Inflation is easing but has been doing so more slowly than previously expected and it remains high. The Board expects that it will be some time yet before inflation is sustainably in the target range.

The path of interest rates that will best ensure that inflation returns to target in a reasonable timeframe remains uncertain and the Board is not ruling anything in or out. The Board will rely upon the data and the evolving assessment of risks. In doing so, it will continue to pay close attention to developments in the global economy, trends in domestic demand, and the outlook for inflation and the labour market.

### Legal

In accordance with section 212(1)(b) of the Regulation, the Responsible Accounting Officer (currently the Finance Manager) certifies the investments identified in this report have been made in accordance with section 625 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, section 212 of the Regulation, and the provisions of Council's 'Investments' policy.

### Conclusion

A report on investments is required to be submitted to Council. As at 31 July 2024, investments total \$32,032,220 and the average rate of return is estimated at 4.68%.

### Attachments

- A. Investment analysis
- B. Investment by type
- C. Investment by Institution
- D. Total funds invested - comparisons
- E. Summary of indebtedness

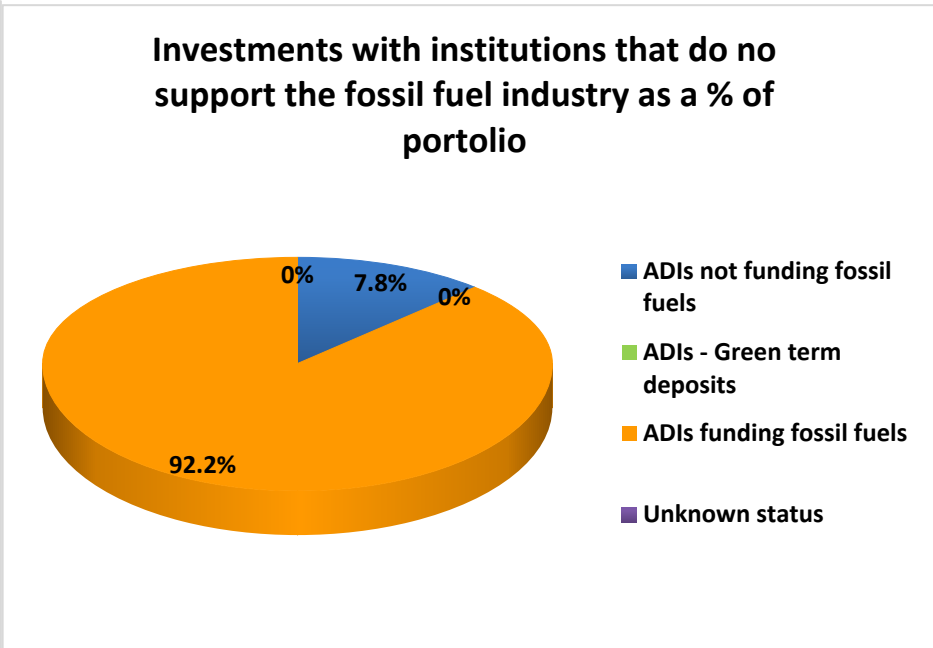
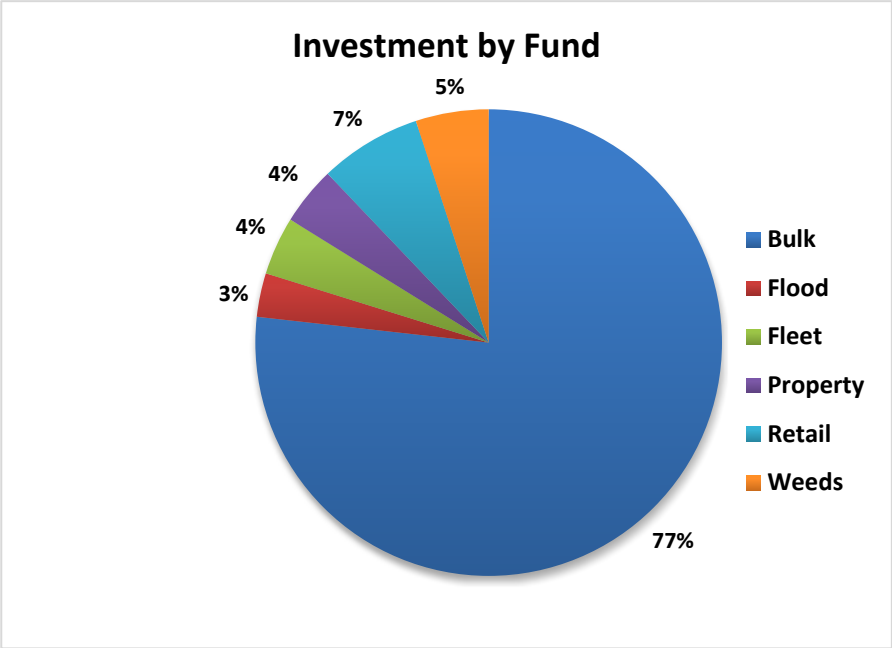
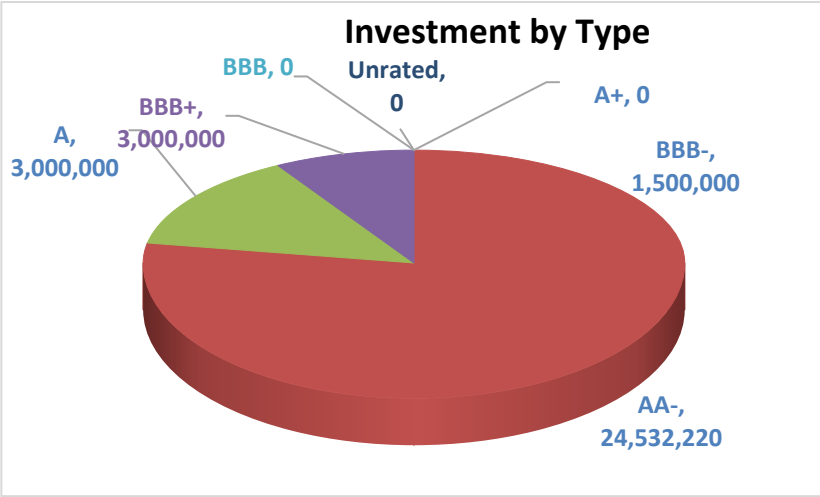
## Investment Analysis

Funds Invested With	S & P Local Long Term Rating	Product Name	Not Fossil Fuel ADI	Lodgement Date	Maturity Date	% of Portfolio	31 July Balance	Rate of Return	Monthly Interest	Year-to-Date Interest
CBA Business Online Saver	AA-	CBA-BOS	No	At call		15.71	5,032,219.98	1.95	23,096.10	23,096.10
Commonwealth Bank of Australia	AA-	TD	No	23/8/2023	22/8/2024	6.24	2,000,000.00	5.47	9,291.51	9,291.51
National Australia Bank Limited	AA-	TD	No	13/9/2023	17/9/2024	4.68	1,500,000.00	5.18	6,599.18	6,599.18
National Australia Bank Limited	AA-	TD	No	19/9/2023	17/9/2024	3.12	1,000,000.00	5.22	4,433.42	4,433.42
Westpac Banking Corporation	AA-	TD	Yes	28/11/2023	3/12/2024	4.68	1,500,000.00	5.44	6,930.41	6,930.41
Westpac Banking Corporation	AA-	TD	Yes	5/12/2023	5/9/2024	3.12	1,000,000.00	5.23	4,441.92	4,441.92
National Australia Bank Limited	AA-	TD	No	23/1/2024	22/10/2024	3.12	1,000,000.00	5.12	4,348.49	4,348.49
National Australia Bank Limited	AA-	TD	No	30/1/2024	29/10/2024	4.68	1,500,000.00	5.07	6,459.04	6,459.04
National Australia Bank Limited	AA-	TD	No	6/2/2024	6/8/2024	6.24	2,000,000.00	5.12	8,696.99	8,696.99
Bank of Queensland	BBB+	TD	No	18/6/2024	21/1/2025	3.12	1,000,000.00	5.20	4,416.44	4,416.44
MyState Bank Limited	BBB+	TD	No	19/6/2024	17/12/2024	6.24	2,000,000.00	5.17	8,781.92	8,781.92
National Australia Bank Limited	AA-	TD	No	18/6/2024	24/9/2024	4.68	1,500,000.00	4.97	6,331.64	6,331.64
Westpac Banking Corporation	AA-	TD	No	25/6/2024	1/10/2024	6.24	2,000,000.00	4.95	8,408.22	8,408.22
National Australia Bank Limited	AA-	TD	No	25/6/2024	7/1/2025	3.12	1,000,000.00	5.12	4,348.49	4,348.49
ING Bank Aust Ltd	A	TD	No	25/6/2024	1/7/2025	3.12	1,000,000.00	5.25	4,458.90	4,458.90
National Australia Bank Limited	AA-	TD	No	2/7/2024	14/1/2025	4.68	1,500,000.00	5.32	6,558.90	6,558.90
Judo Bank	BBB-	TD	No	2/7/2024	15/10/2024	4.68	1,500,000.00	5.15	6,349.32	6,349.32
ING Bank Aust Ltd	A	TD	No	2/7/2024	8/7/2025	6.24	2,000,000.00	5.43	8,926.03	8,926.03
Westpac Banking Corporation	AA-	TD	No	18/7/2024	19/11/2024	6.24	2,000,000.00	4.99	3,827.95	3,827.95
MATURED TDs									2,818.08	2,818.08
						<b>100.00</b>	<b>32,032,219.98</b>	<b>4.68</b>	<b>139,522.95</b>	<b>139,522.95</b>
<b>Total Investment Holdings</b>						<b>100.00</b>	<b>32,032,219.98</b>		<b>139,522.95</b>	<b>139,522.95</b>
									Total YTD Interest	<b>139,522.95</b>

Yes

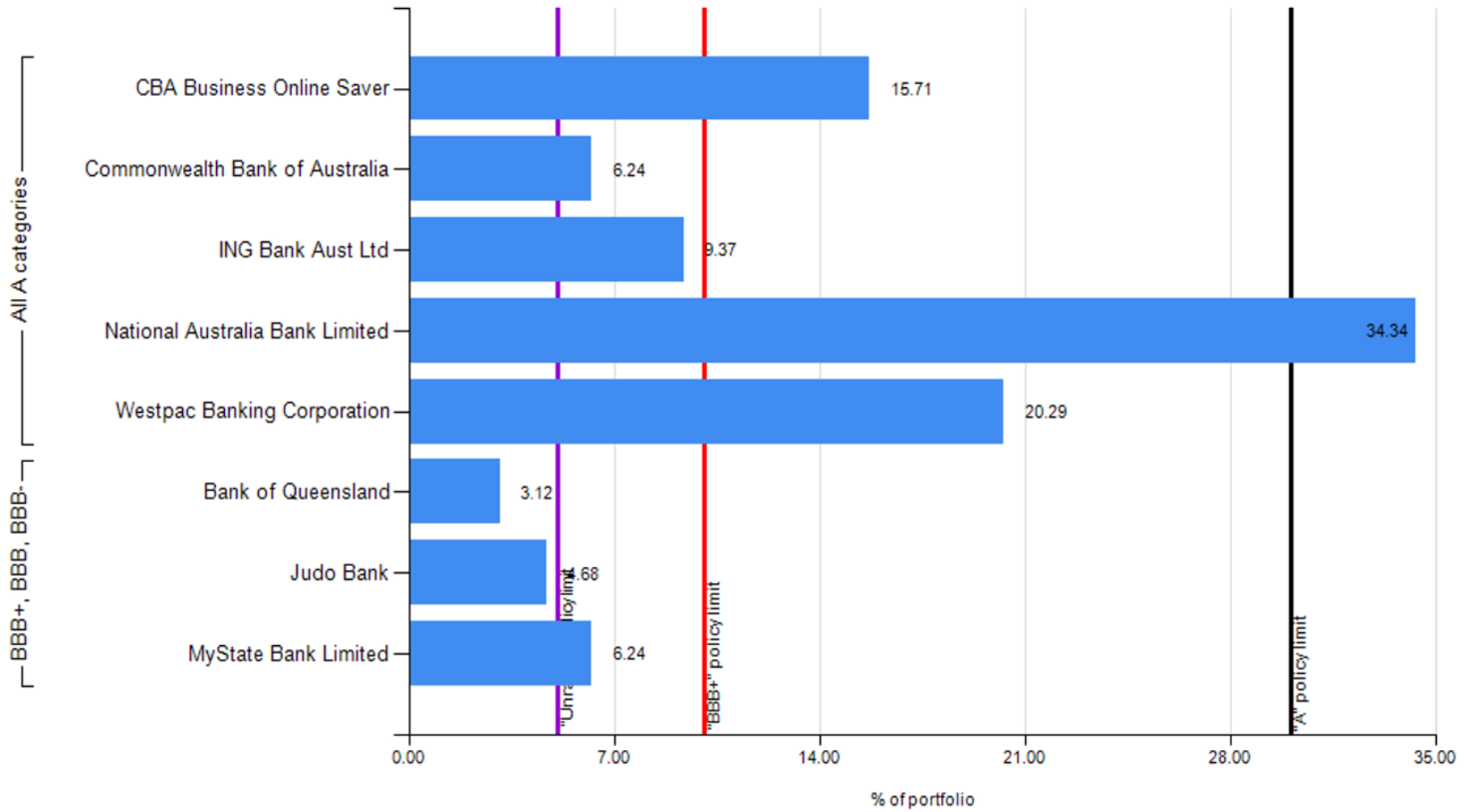
Deposits with Australian Deposit-taking institutions (ADI) are Government.  
 Guaranteed for balances totalling up to \$250,000 per customer, per institution.

Budget Interest @ 31 July 2024 **119,075.00**  
 Budget variance **20,447.95**

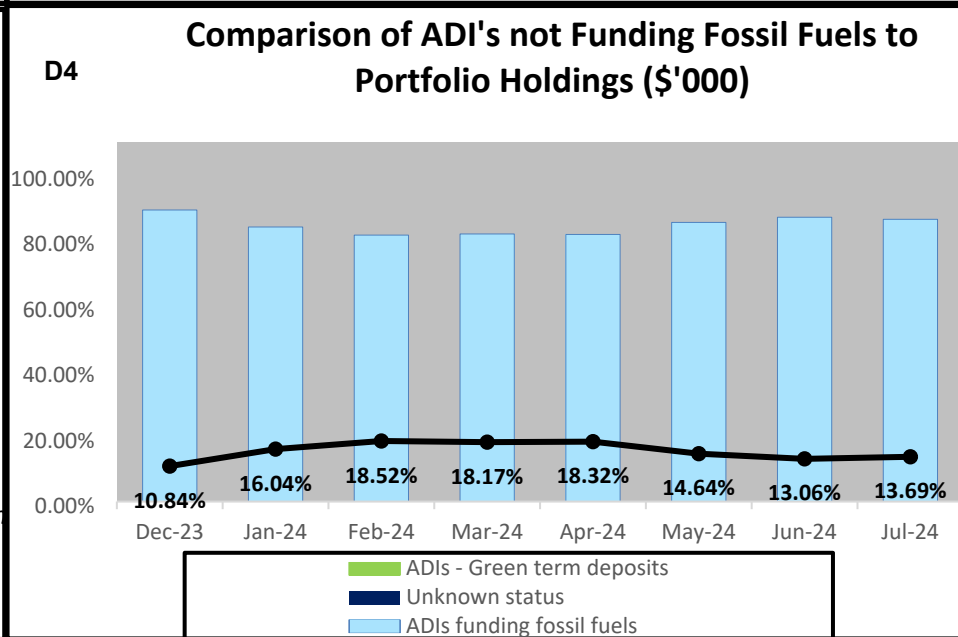
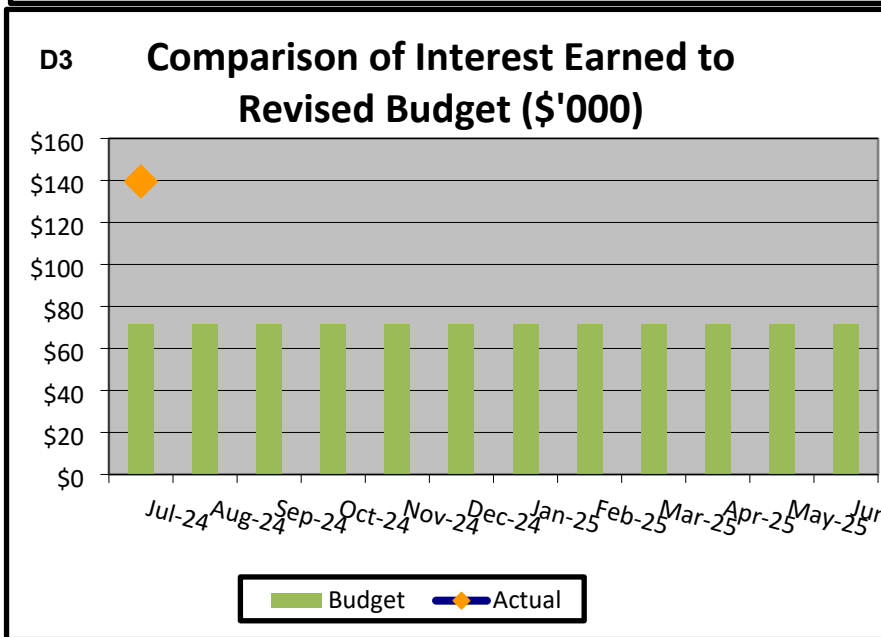
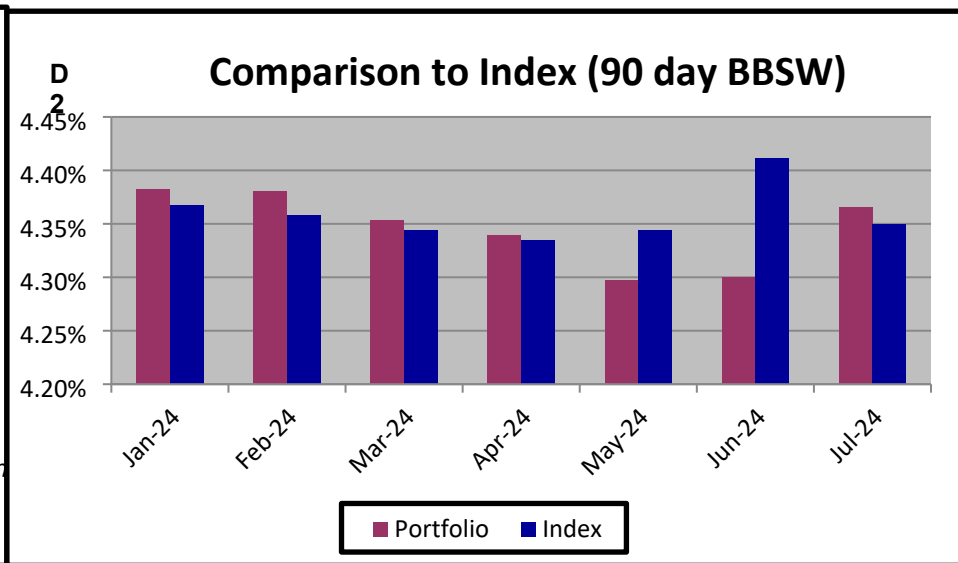
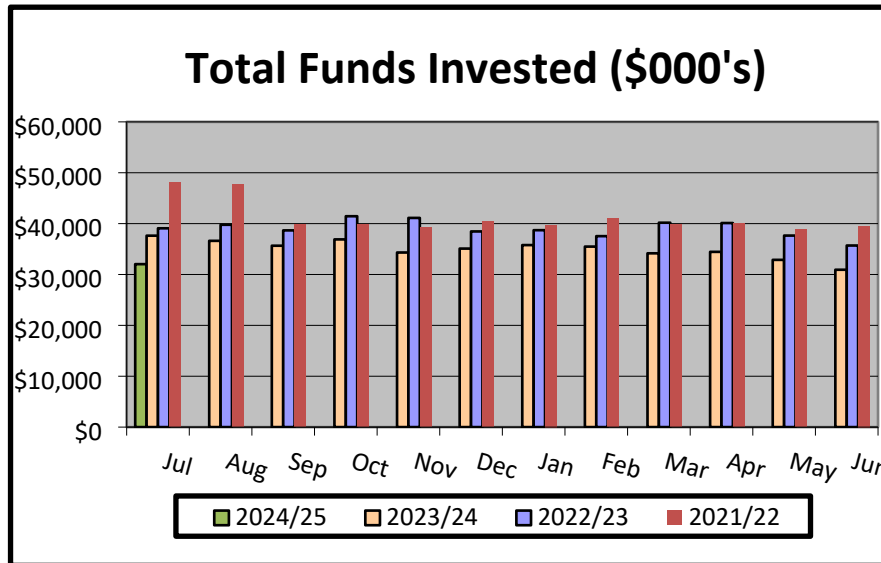




Investment by Institution



Note: Institutions shown with "xxx" and in red are in breach of council policy.



**Summary of indebtedness**

Information	Loan #1	Loan #2	Loan #3	Loan #4	Loan #5	Loan #6	Loan #7	Total
Institution	<b>CBA</b>	<b>CBA</b>	<b>CBA</b>	<b>Dexia</b>	<b>NAB</b>	<b>NAB</b>	<b>Tcorp</b>	
Principal Borrowed	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 10,000,000	\$ 10,000,000	\$ 10,000,000	\$ 10,000,000	\$ 13,500,000	\$ 58,500,000
Date Obtained	9-Jun-04	31-May-05	31-May-06	21-Feb-07	31-May-07	25-Sep-07	7-Jun-21	
Term (Years)	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	
Interest Rate	6.82%	6.25%	6.37%	6.40%	6.74%	6.85%	2.68%	
Date Due	10-Jun-24	31-May-25	31-May-26	21-Feb-27	31-May-27	25-Sep-27	7-Jun-41	
Annual Commitment	\$ 184,785	\$ 264,921	\$ 891,595	\$ 893,507	\$ 917,390	\$ 925,933	\$ 876,390	\$ 4,954,520
Principal Repaid LTD	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 2,746,968	\$ 8,349,888	\$ 7,965,426	\$ 7,528,748	\$ 7,152,562	\$ 1,596,420	\$ 37,340,011
Interest Incurred LTD	\$ 1,695,702	\$ 2,286,525	\$ 7,698,825	\$ 7,673,589	\$ 8,066,876	\$ 8,125,327	\$ 1,032,750	\$ 36,579,593
Principal Outstanding	-\$ 0	\$ 253,032	\$ 1,650,112	\$ 2,034,574	\$ 2,471,252	\$ 2,847,439	\$ 11,903,580	\$ 21,159,990
Interest Outstanding	\$ -	\$ 11,889	\$ 133,078	\$ 199,571	\$ 301,614	\$ 405,216	\$ 2,995,054	\$ 4,046,421

## Retail Water Customer Account Assistance

Responsible Officer: Group Manager Organisational Services (Helen McNeil)

### Recommendation

That Council receive and note the Retail Water Customer Account Assistance listed in Table 1 of this report approved in the six-month period January to June 2024 by the General Manager under delegated authority.

### Background

Six applications for financial assistance, in accordance with section 356 (1) and 582 (1) *Local Government Act 1993* (LG Act) and Council's 'Retail Water Customer Account Assistance' policy, were received in the six-month period January to June 2024. Details of the applications are set out below:

**Table 1**

### Section 356 (Non pensioner)

Account	Date application received	Nature of leak	Original water charges due	S356 financial assistance to be approved	Adjusted water charges due after approval
11662	5-Apr-24	An underground pipe between the meter and the customers house was damaged by tree roots. Leak detection equipment was used to locate the leak and it was subsequently fixed.	\$2,632.11	\$795.72	\$1,836.39
10545	24-Apr-24	A pipe connecting to a cattle trough was leaking underground and the section of pipe closer to the surface had been damaged by cattle.	\$8,699.66	\$5,344.32	\$3,355.34
11636	8-May-24	A pipeline underneath a pond was found to be leaking. The service line isolating the shower taps was also leaking.	\$3,882.10	\$1,732.80	\$2,149.30
10101	20-May-24	A leak was found under a planter box at the entrance of the customers house.	\$1,882.33	\$232.56	\$1,649.77
10027	20-Jun-24	A water leak was located approximately 5 metres from the water meter.	\$2,554.90	\$763.80	\$1,791.10
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$19,651.10</b>	<b>\$8,869.20</b>	<b>\$10,781.90</b>

**Section 582 (pensioner)**

Account	Date application received	Nature of leak	Original water charges due	S582 financial assistance to be approved	Adjusted water charges due after approval
10647	30-May-24	A licensed plumber located a leaking pipe deep underground and subsequently repaired it.	\$1,214.63	\$152.76	\$1,061.87
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$1,214.63</b>	<b>\$152.76</b>	<b>\$1,061.87</b>

**Governance**

- **Finance**

The 2023/24 financial year budget allocation for applications made in accordance with the 'Retail Water Customer Account Assistance' policy is \$25,000.

**Table 2**

<b>Budget Table S356/S582</b>		
<b>2023/24 financial year budget</b>	<b>\$25,000.00</b>	<b>No. of applications</b>
Natural disaster - Major Feb/Mar 22 Flood events	\$550.22	1
S356 assistance reported in the July to December 2023 period	\$8,373.03	3
S356 assistance approved in the January to June 2024 period (Table1)	\$8,869.20	5
S582 assistance approved in the January to June 2024 period (Table1)	\$152.76	1
<b>Budget remaining 2023/24 financial year*</b>	<b>\$7,054.79</b>	

\*Remaining budget for 2023/24 does not get carried forward

- **Legal**

Section 356 of the LG Act allows Council to 'contribute money or otherwise grant financial assistance'.

Section 377(1A) of the LG Act allows Council to delegate to the General Manager authority to grant financial assistance provided it is (a) part of a specified program (b) included in the Operational Plan (c) the program budget does not exceed 5% of Council's income for that year, and (d) the program applies to all persons uniformly.

**Conclusion**

The total value of financial assistance granted by the General Manager under delegated authority, and in accordance with Council's 'Retail Water Customer Account Assistance' policy, during the period January to June 2024 equated to \$ 9,021.96.

## Water production and consumption - June 2024

*Responsible Officer: Group Manager Operations (Adam Nesbitt)*

### Recommendation

That the report be received and noted.

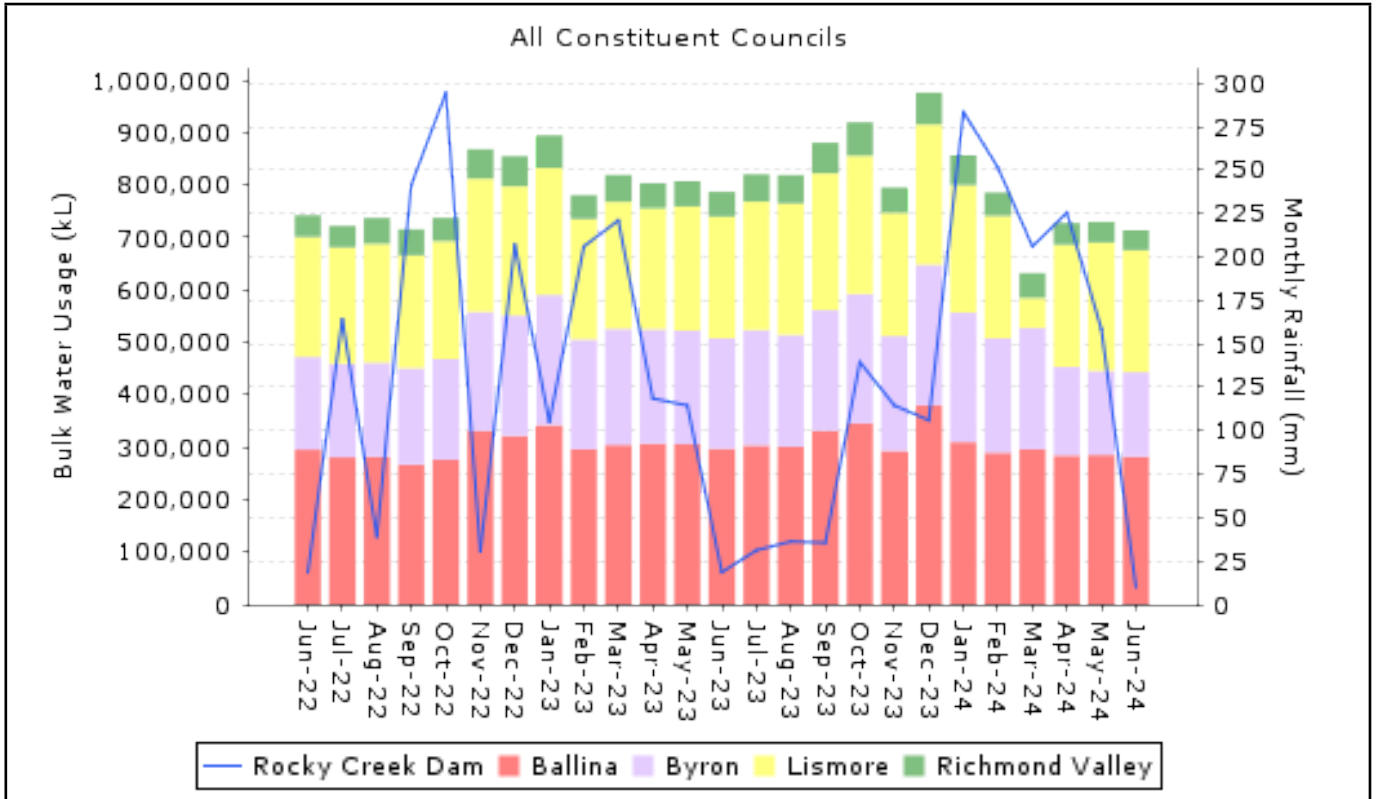
### Background

The table below is the June 2024 bulk water sales to the constituent councils in kilolitres compared to the corresponding June sales for 2023 and 2022

Council	June 2022 (kL)	June 2023 (kL)	June 2024 (kL)	% of Total Sales
Ballina Shire Council	295,346	297,311	282,086	39.47%
Byron Shire Council	176,961	210,375	161,094	22.54%
Lismore City Council	229,085	232,550	232,825	32.58%
Richmond Valley Council	41,335	47,537	38,616	5.4%
<b>TOTAL MONTHLY CONSUMPTION BY CONSTITUENT COUNCILS</b>	<b>742,727</b>	<b>787,773</b>	<b>714,621</b>	

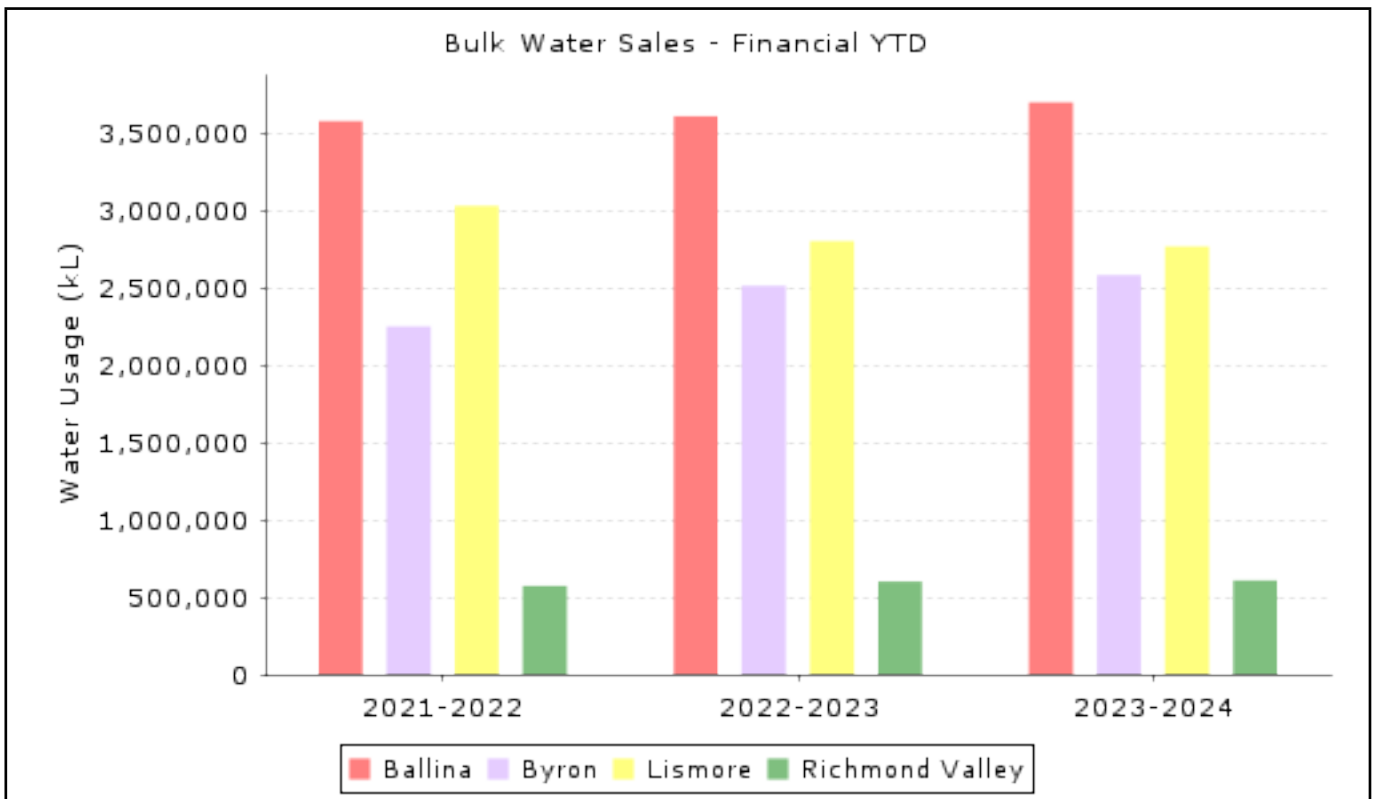
**Water usage - all constituent councils**

**Figure 1** shows the combined monthly bulk water consumption and rainfall at Rocky Creek Dam for the previous two years.



**Figure 1: Total monthly consumption by constituent council and rainfall.**

**Figure 2** shows the total bulk water sales for the financial year to date compared with the previous two years.



**Figure 2: Bulk water sales by constituent council - 1 July to 30 June**

Figure 3 and 4 shows the total usage of individual commercial water fill stations for the financial year to date compared with the previous two years.

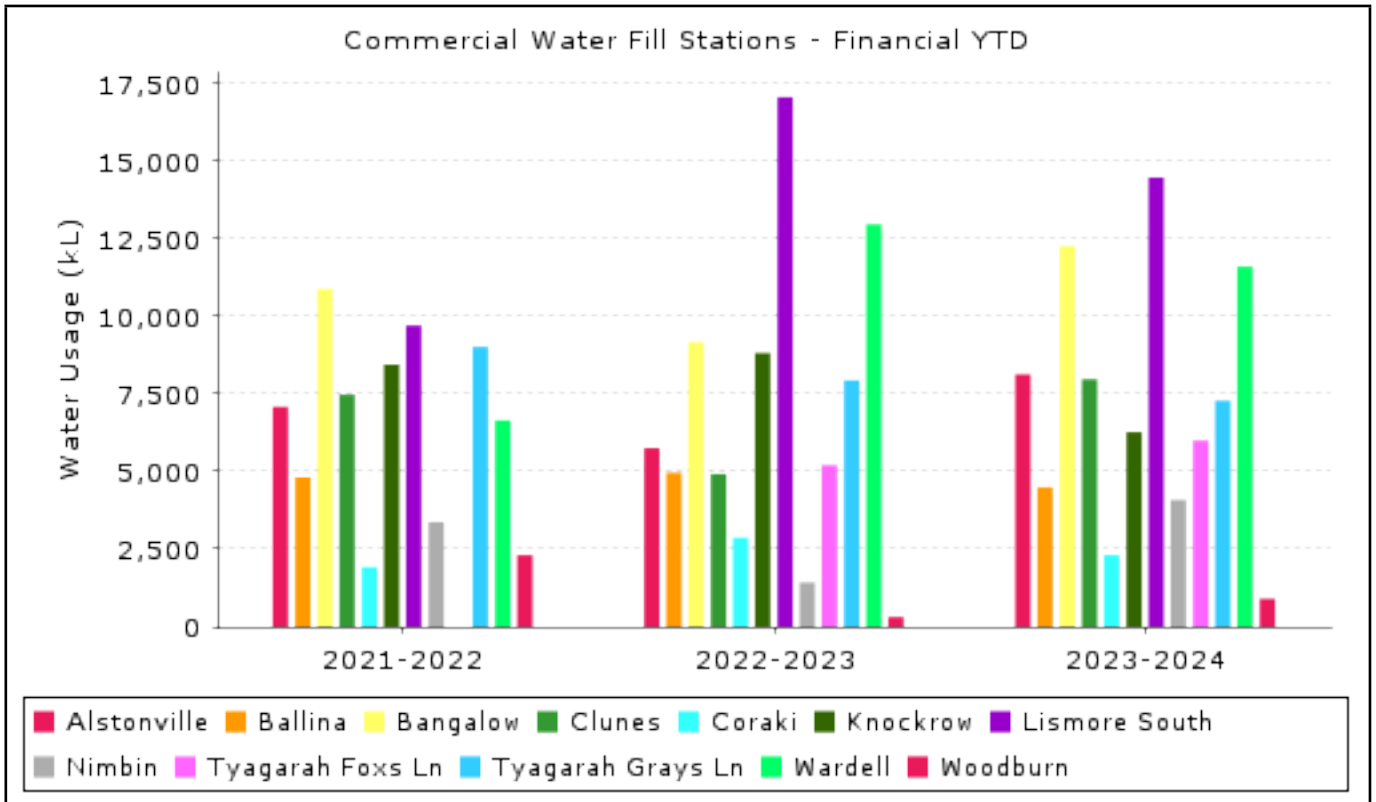


Figure 3: Comparison of commercial water fill stations total consumption - 1 July to 30 June

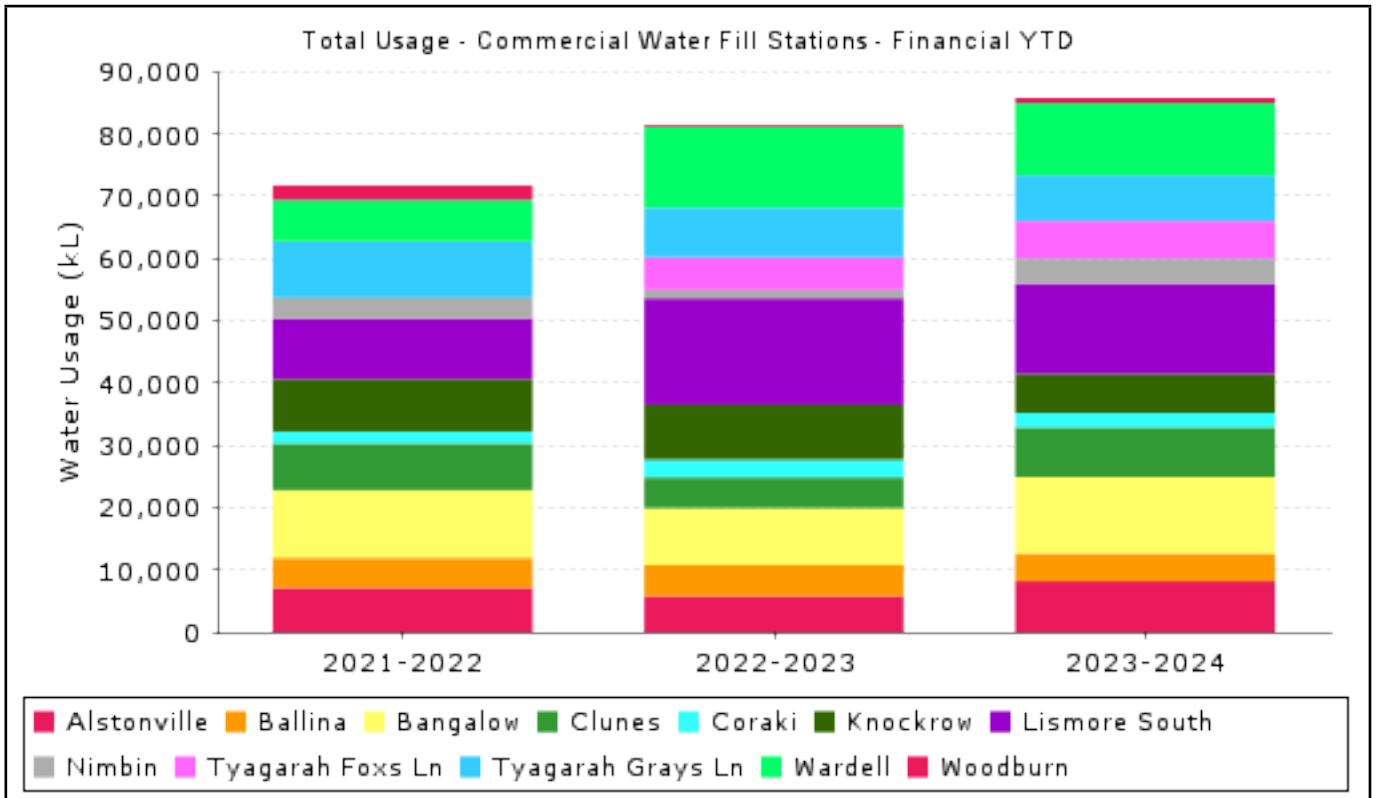


Figure 4: Total usage of commercial water fill stations - 1 July to 30 June



Figure 5 shows the combined water fill station monthly consumption for the previous two years. Rainfall data is from the rain gauge at Rocky Creek Dam.

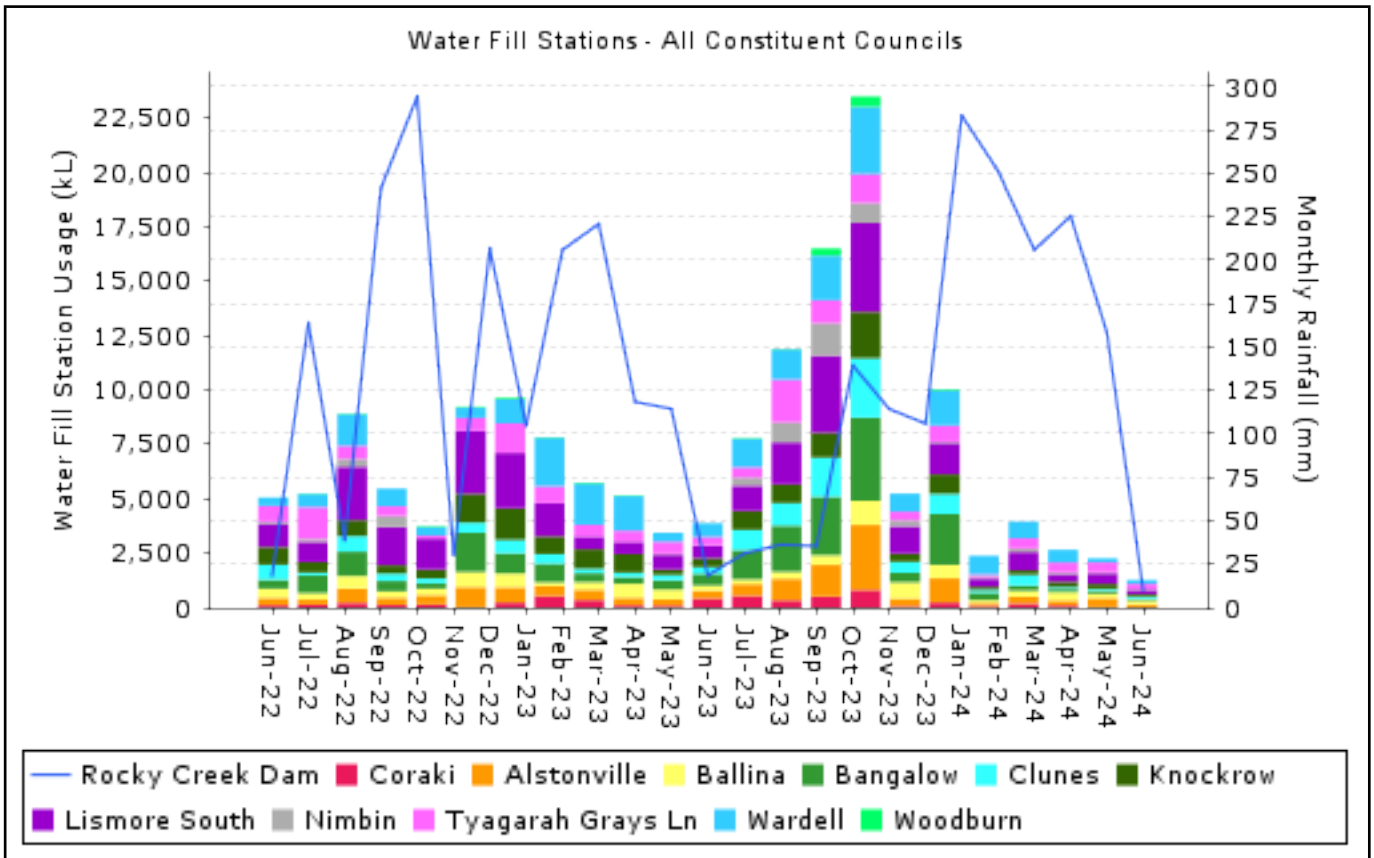


Figure 5: Total monthly consumption for commercial water fill stations and rainfall.

### Source Contribution

Rocky Creek Dam capacity as of 30 June 2024 was 99.3%  
 Emigrant Creek Dam capacity as of 30 June 2024 was 101.5%

Source	June 2024 (kL)		Cumulative total 2023-2024 (kL)	
Rocky Creek Dam	826,261	98.83%	10,163,766	90.90%
Wilson River	9,430	1.13%	625,485	5.59%
Emigrant Creek Dam	327	0.04%	392,447	3.51%
Alstonville Plateau Bores	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Coastal Sands	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
	<b>868,018</b>		<b>11,181,698</b>	

# Rocky Creek Dam

Figure 6 shows Rocky Creek dam current water level and compares to previous years when levels reached lowest recorded dam level. Rainfall data is for the current financial year only.

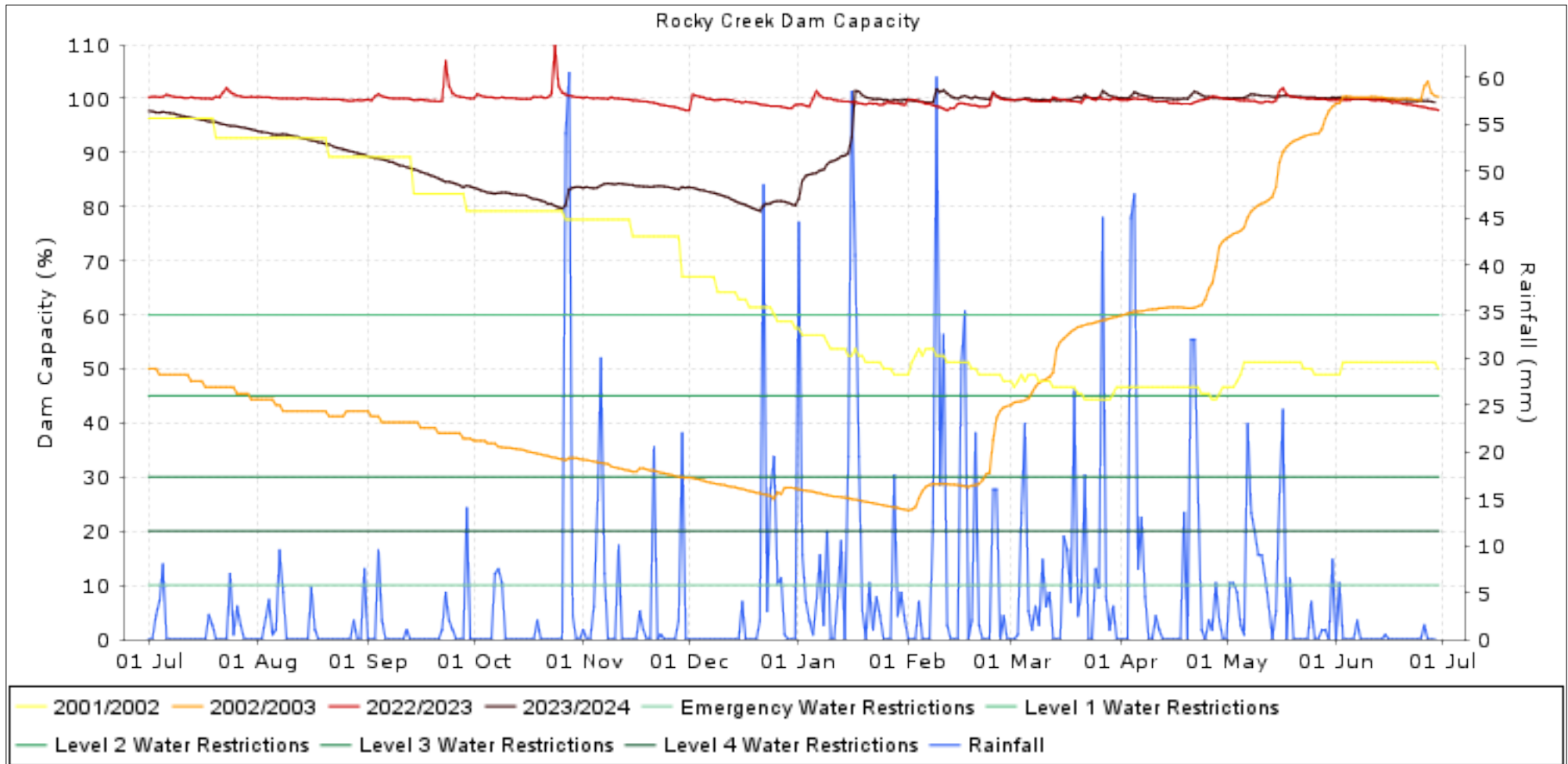


Figure 6: Rocky Creek Dam capacity and rainfall

# Emigrant Creek Dam

Figure 7 show Emigrant Creek dam current water level and compares to previous two years. Rainfall data is for the current financial year only.

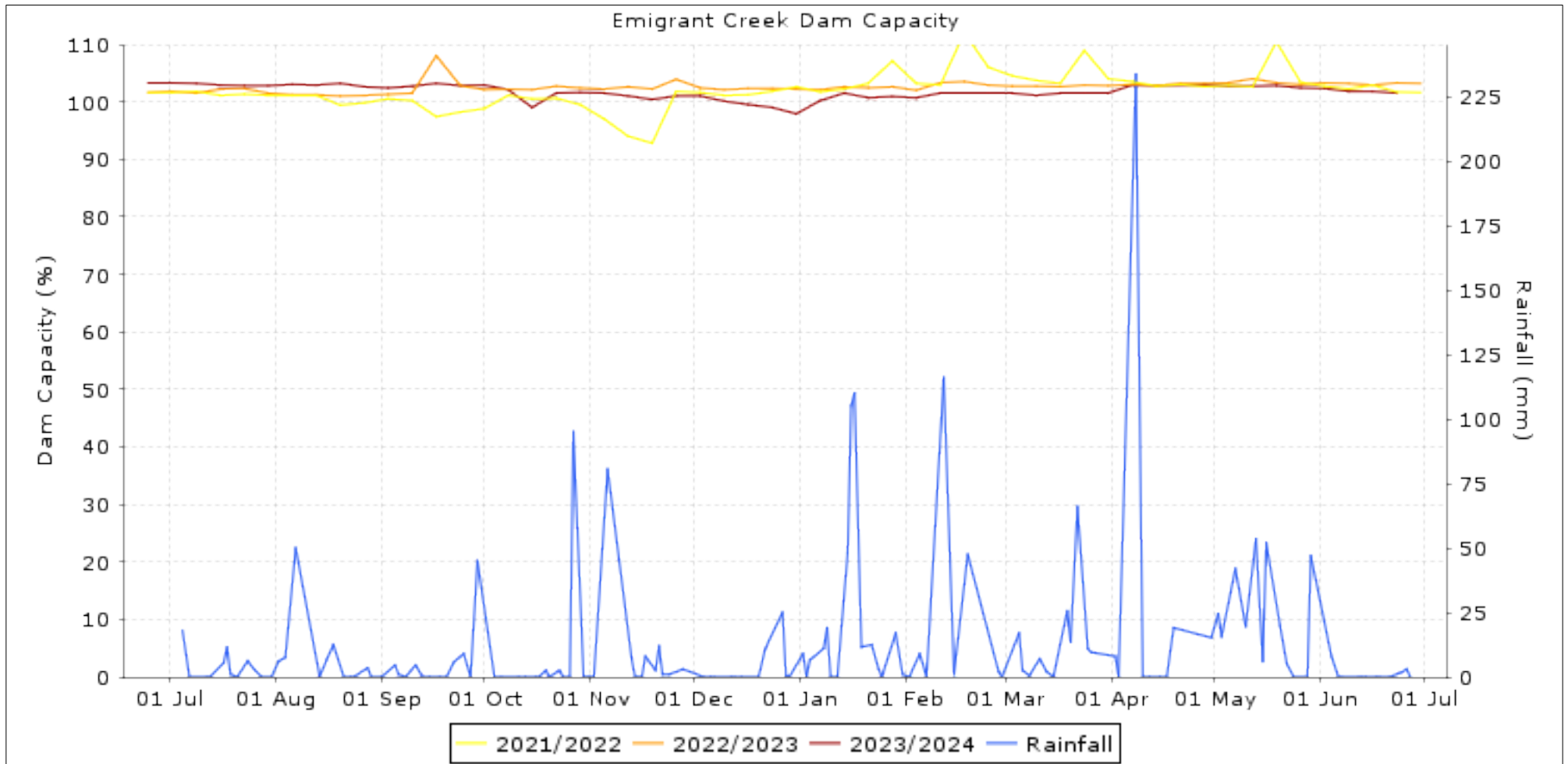
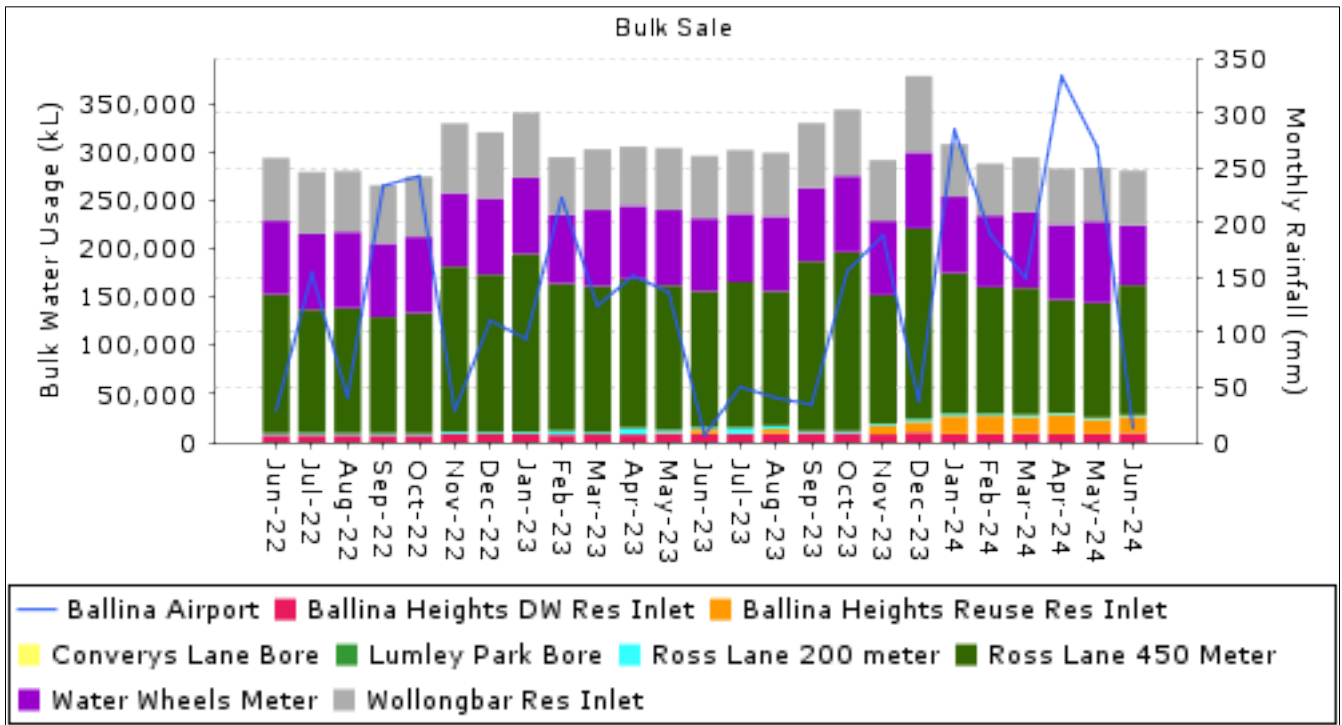


Figure 7: Emigrant Creek Dam capacity and rainfall

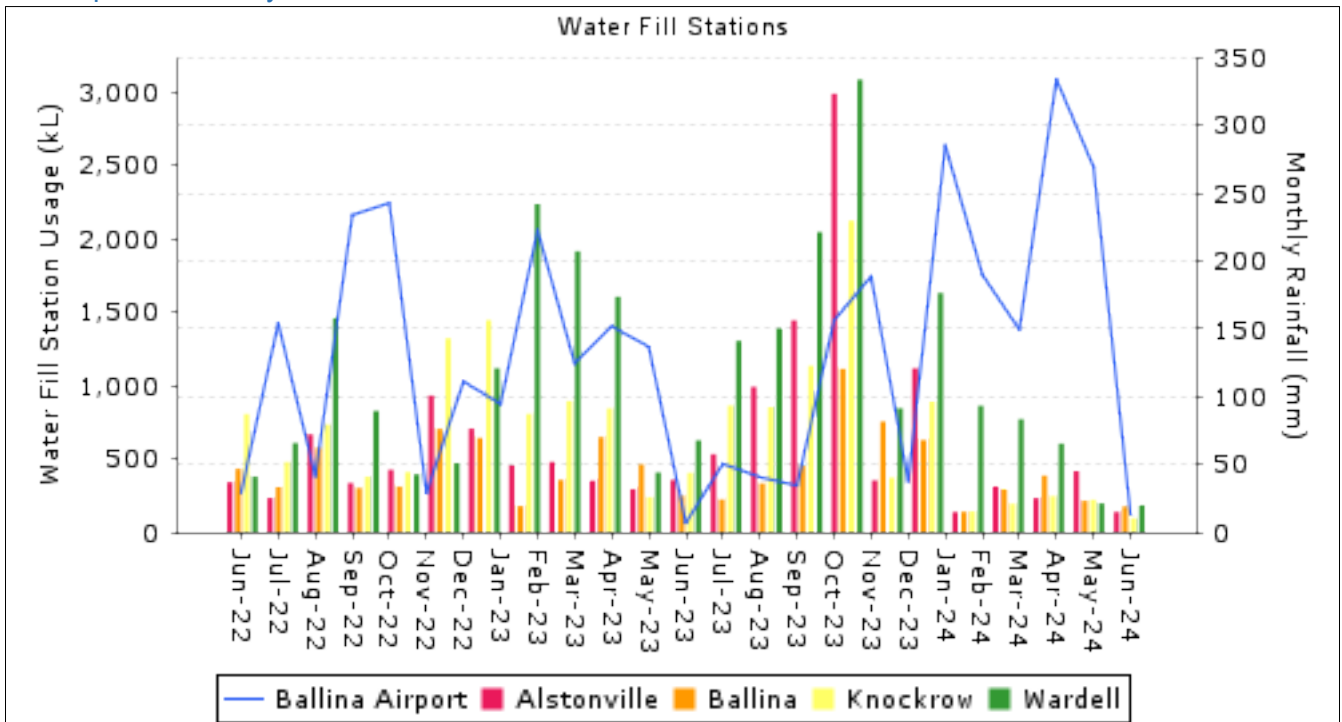
**Monthly consumption by constituents - Ballina Shire Council**

**Figure 8** shows the monthly consumption for Ballina Shire Council area for the previous two years. Rainfall data is from the Bureau of Meteorology rainfall station Ballina Airport.



**Figure 8: Monthly consumption and rainfall - Ballina Shire Council.**

**Figure 9** shows the monthly consumption for water fill stations for Ballina Shire Council and the rainfall for the previous two years.



**Figure 9: Monthly consumption commercial water fill station and rainfall.**

Figure 10 shows the total usage of individual commercial water fill stations for the financial year to date compared with the previous two years.

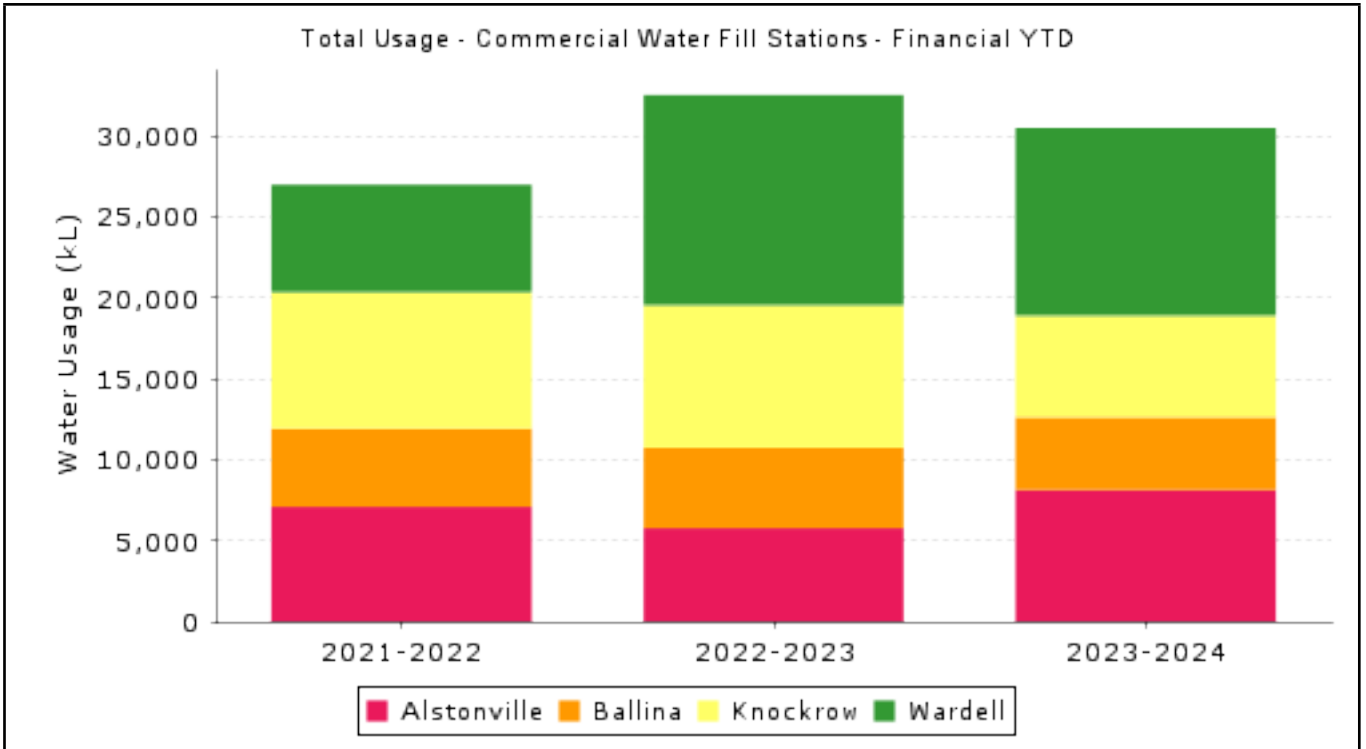


Figure 10: Total usage of commercial water fill stations. 1 July to 30 June

Monthly consumption by constituents - Byron Shire Council

Figure 11 shows the monthly consumption for Byron Shire Council area for the previous two years. Rainfall data is from the Bureau of Meteorology rainfall station Cape Byron.

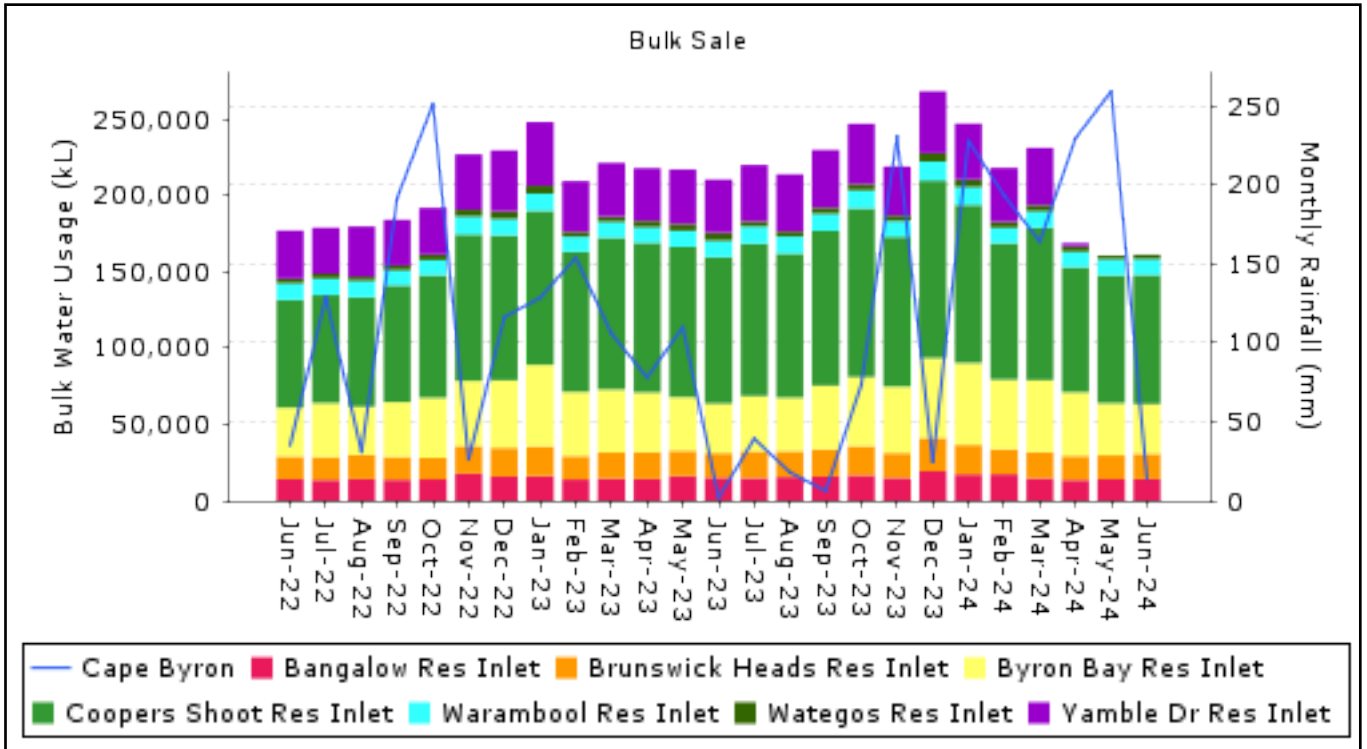


Figure 11: Monthly consumption and rainfall - Byron Shire Council.

Figure 12 shows the monthly consumption for water fill stations for Byron Shire Council and the rainfall for the previous two years.

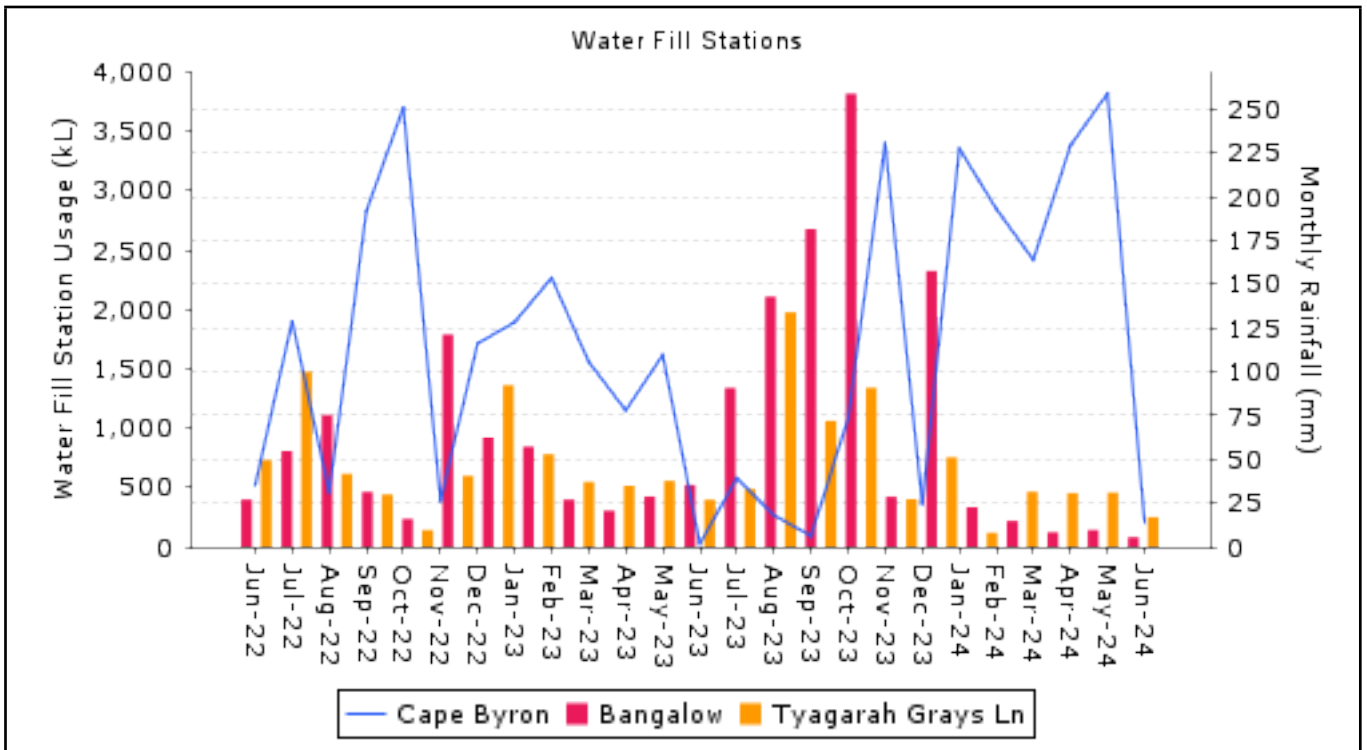


Figure 12: Monthly consumption commercial water fill station and rainfall.

Figure 13 shows the total usage of individual commercial water fill stations for the financial year to date compared with the previous two years.

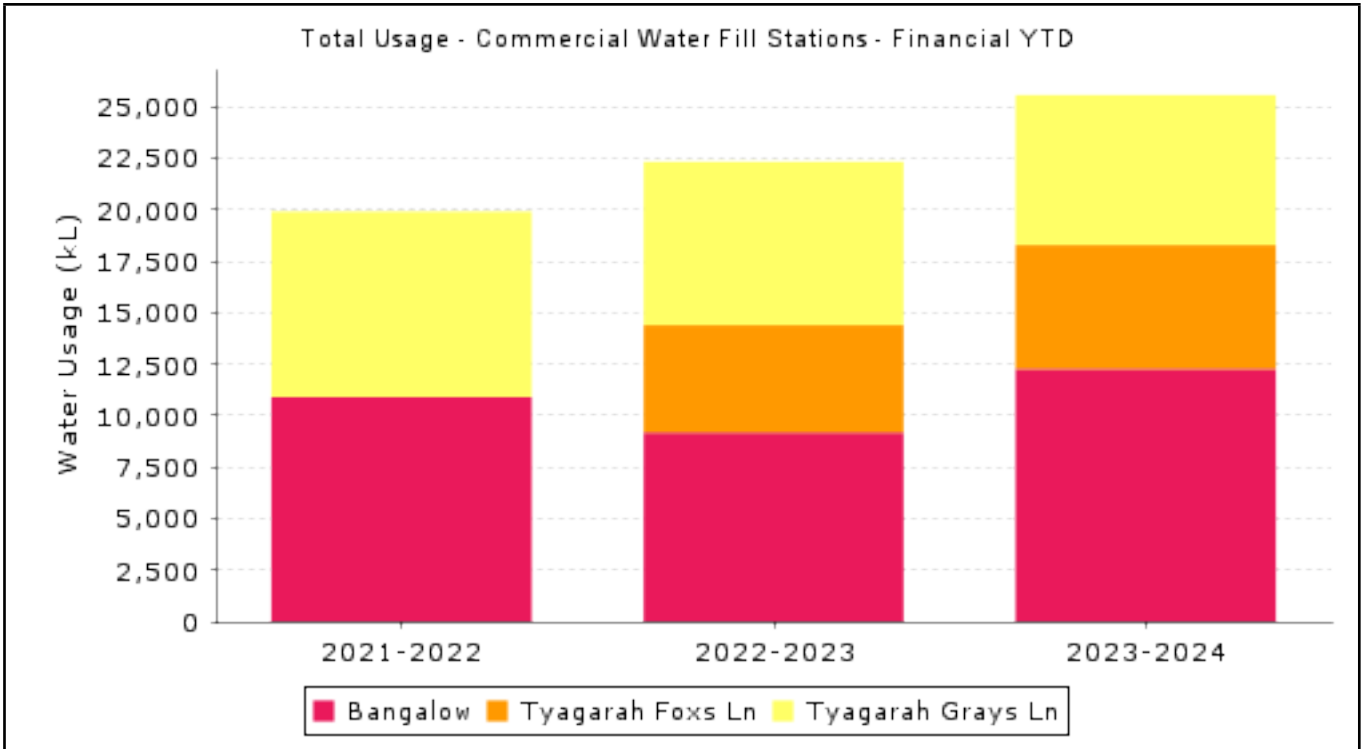


Figure 13: Total usage of commercial water fill stations. 1 July to 30 June

Monthly consumption by constituents - Lismore City Council

Figure 14 shows the monthly consumption for Lismore City Council area for the previous two years. Rainfall data is from the Bureau of Meteorology rainfall station Lismore Airport.

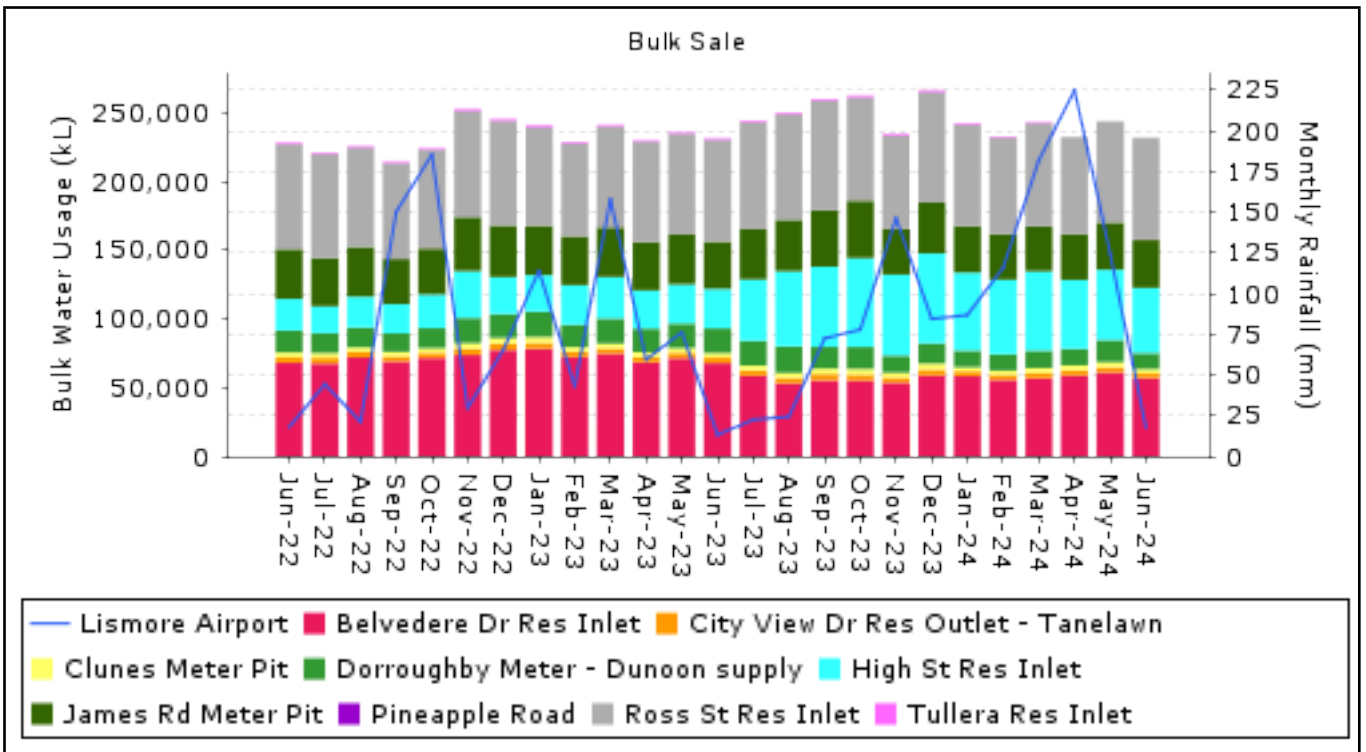


Figure 14: Monthly consumption and rainfall - Lismore City Council.

Figure 15 shows the monthly consumption for water fill stations for Lismore City Council and the rainfall for the previous two years.

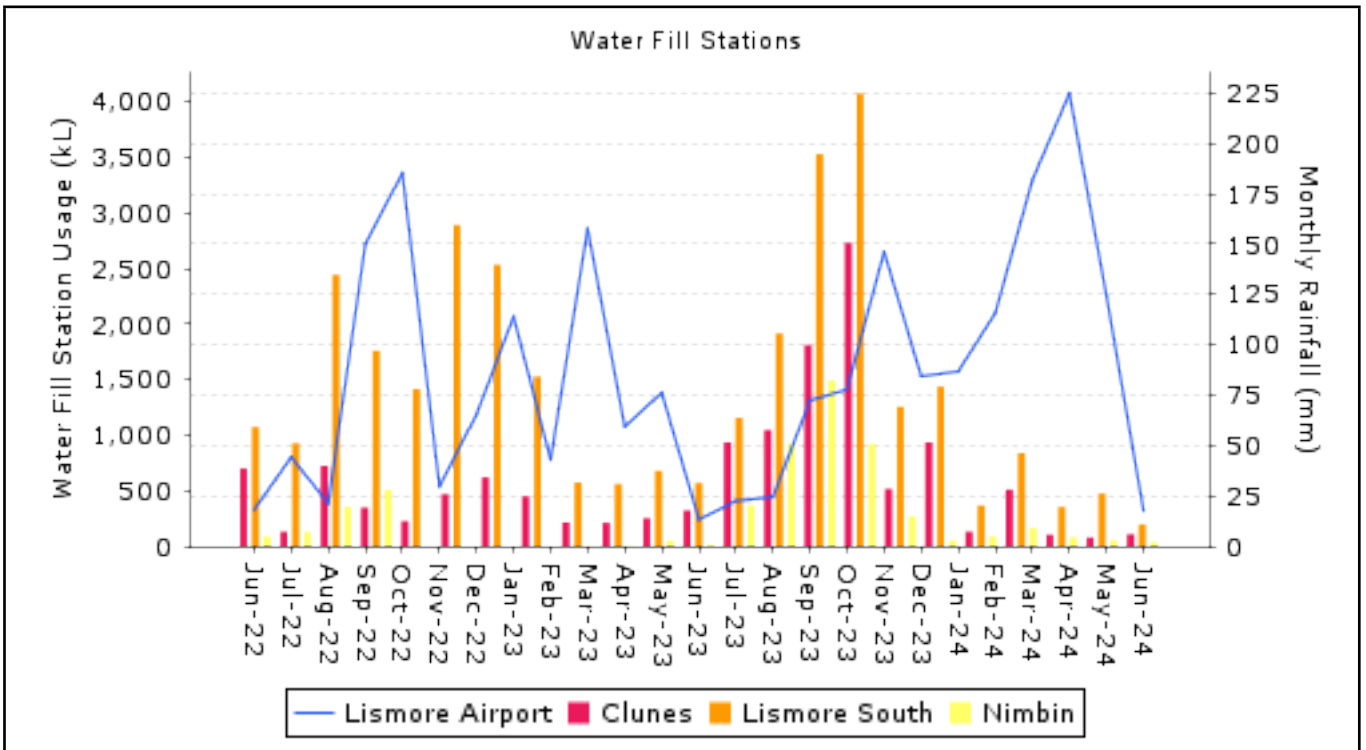


Figure 15: Monthly consumption commercial water fill station and rainfall.



Figure 16 shows the total usage of individual commercial water fill stations for the financial year to date compared with the previous two years.

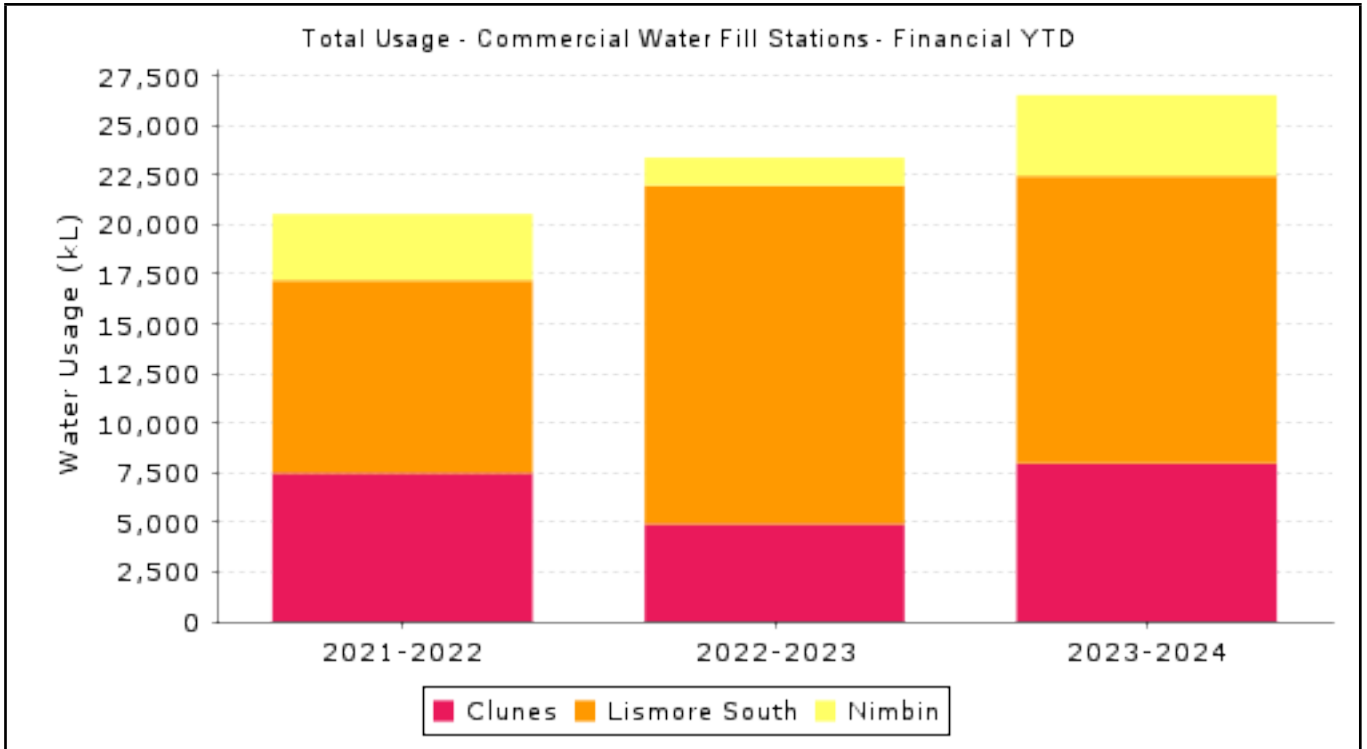


Figure 16: Total usage of commercial water fill stations. 1 July to 30 June

Monthly consumption by constituents - Richmond Valley Council

Figure 17 shows the monthly consumption for Richmond Valley Council area for the previous two years. Rainfall data is from the Bureau of Meteorology rainfall station Evans Head.

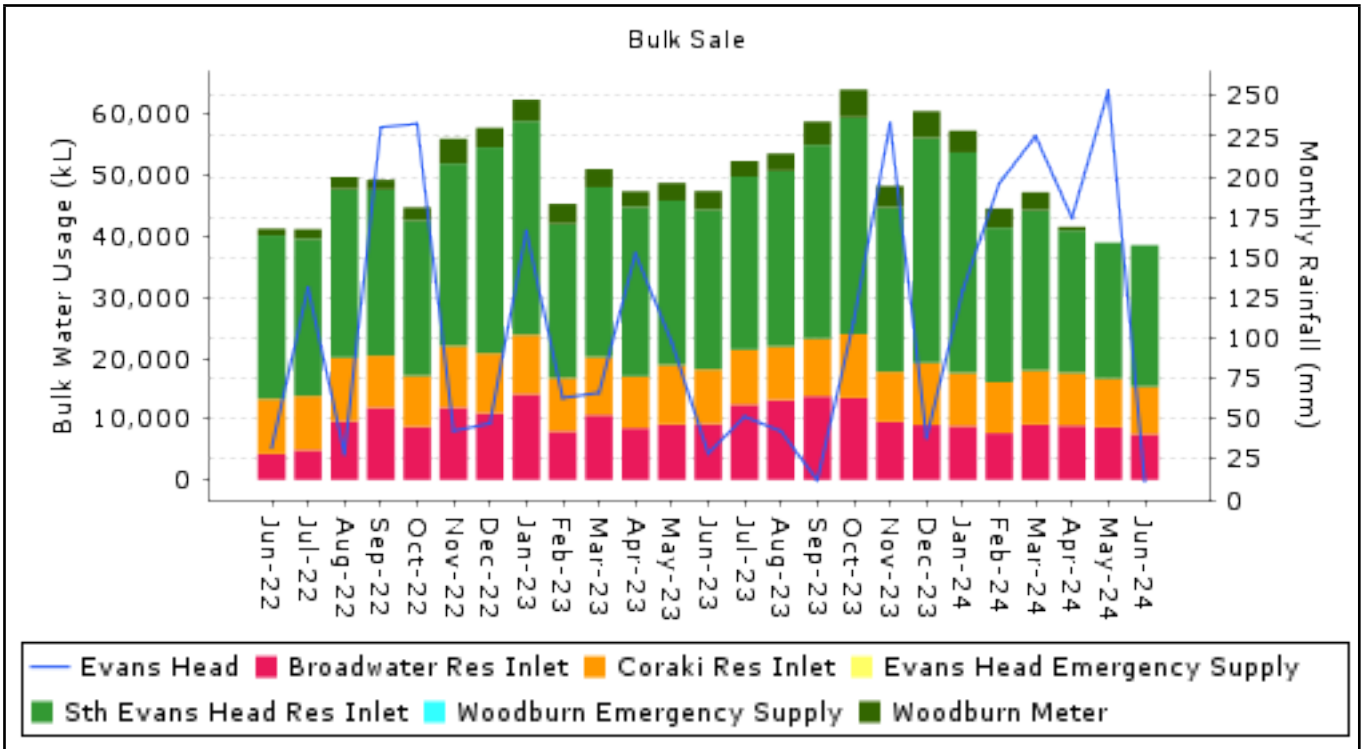


Figure 17: Monthly consumption and rainfall - Richmond Valley Council.

Figure 18 shows the monthly consumption for water fill stations for Richmond Valley Council and the rainfall for the previous two years.

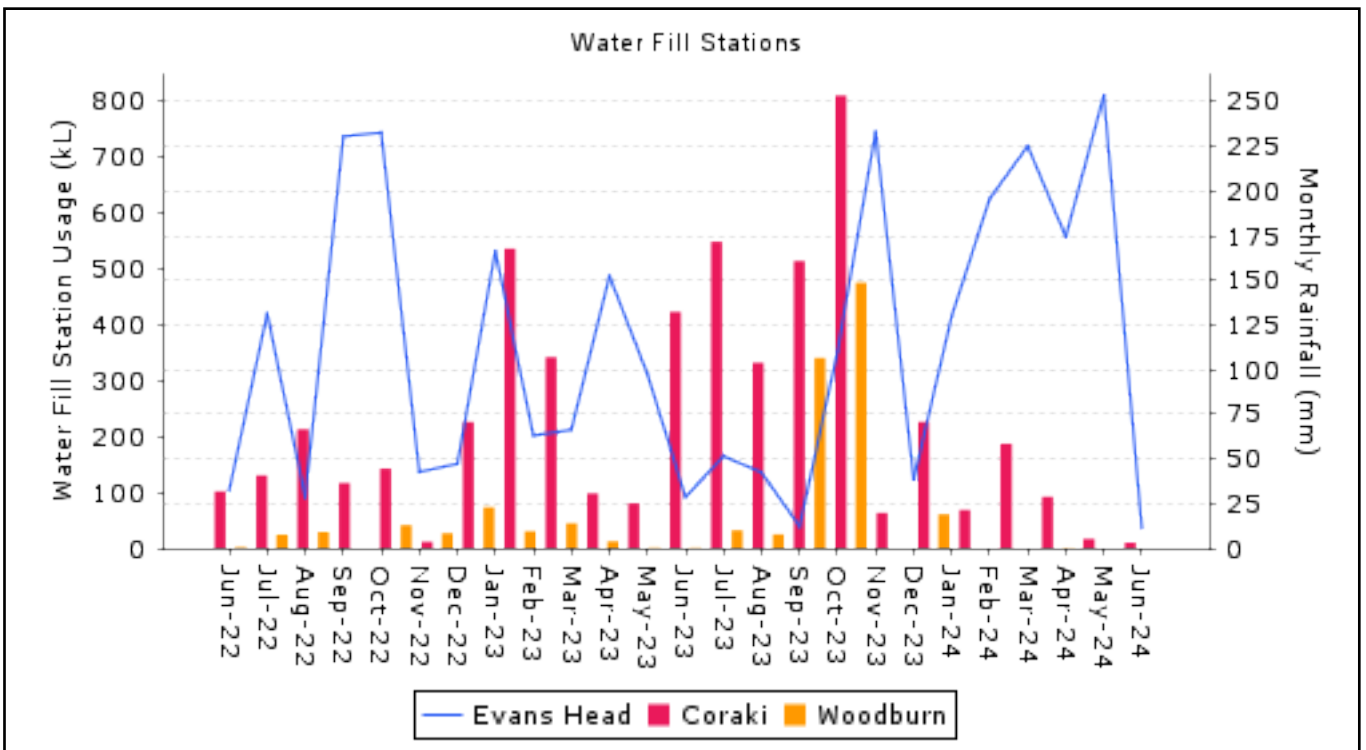
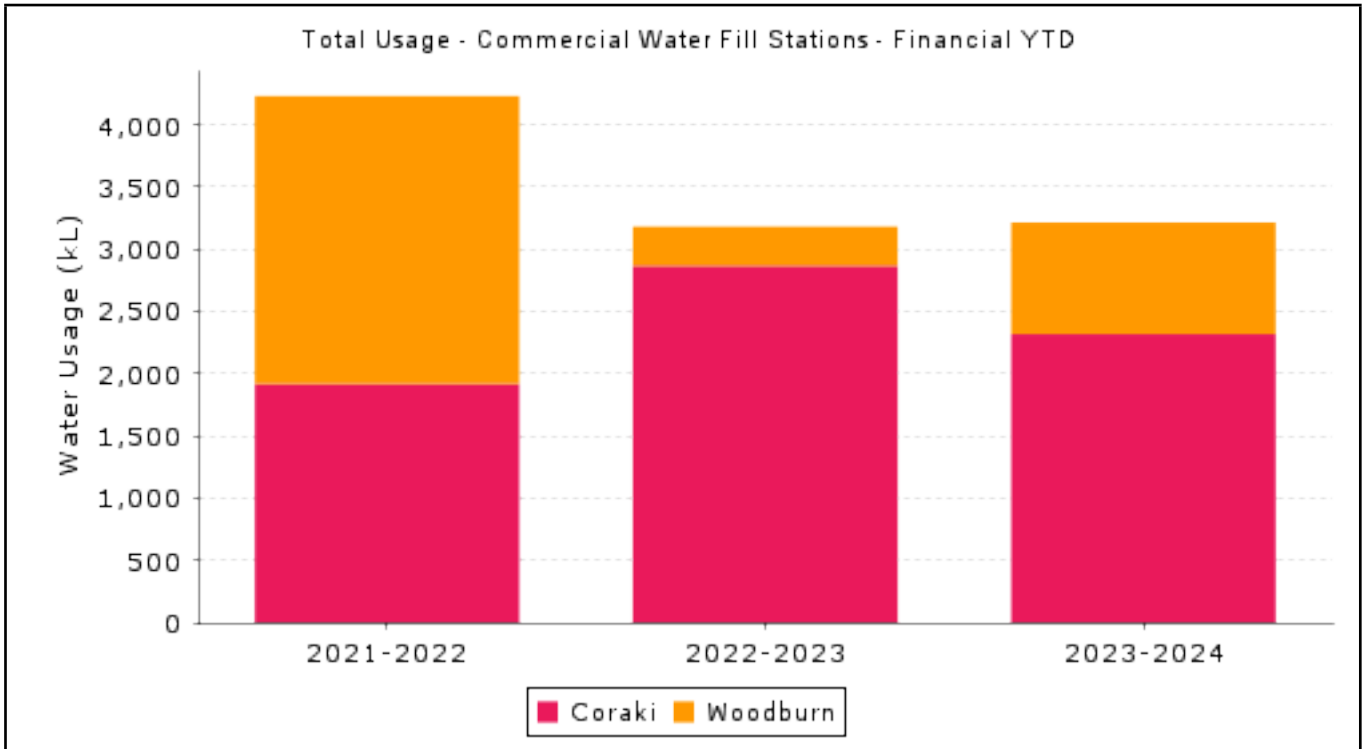


Figure 18: Monthly consumption commercial water fill station and rainfall.

**Figure 19** shows the total usage of individual commercial water fill stations for the financial year to date compared with the previous two years.



**Figure 19: Total usage of commercial water fill stations. 1 July to 30 June**

## Debt write-off information report

*Responsible Officer: Group Manager Organisational Services (Helen McNeil)*

### Recommendation

That Council receive and note the debt write-off information report with debts written-off totalling \$ 8,356.80 for the period 1 January 2024 to 30 June 2024.

### Background

Council's 'Debt Management and Financial Hardship' policy provides that an information summary report be submitted to Council on a bi-annual basis.

As per Council Resolution [50/22]:

- All debts above \$5,000.00 (ex-GST) may be written off only by resolution of Council.
- Council has delegated to the General Manager the power to write-off debts equal to or below the \$5,000.00 threshold.

The General Manager has delegated authority for the write-off of debts equal to or below:

- \$ 1,000.00 to the Group Manager Organisational Services and the Finance Manager.
- Debts written off equal to or below \$ 5,000

Debts approved for write-off by Council staff were done so under delegation and in accordance with clauses 131 or 213 of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*.

Debts approved for write-off during the period 1 January 2024 to 30 June 2024 are tabled below:

**Table 1:**

Customer type	Ref. number	Write-off amount	Background	Reason	Approved by
Retail water account	11080	\$47.15	The customer's meter was replaced with a smart meter on 29/02/2024 they received a bill for the final read indicating that the average daily usage increased from 0.2245kL to 1kL resulting in an additional 20kL of usage. The customer was unable to locate a leak and did not recall extra usage so they requested that Rous investigate further. The final meter reading photo confirmed the read was recorded and charged correctly. The only way to investigate their usage further is to download the cycle unit data from the old meter to see the usage. This would take 3 hours in labour to travel to Ballina and go through the removed meters to locate the old meter. There is no guarantee the meter, if found, will contain the required daily data. It is not cost effective to attempt to recover the debt.	Attempt to recover debt not cost effective	FM

Customer type	Ref. number	Write-off amount	Background	Reason	Approved by
Retail water account	10387	\$161.12	The final read on the meter before the change over to a smart meter was less than the previous read and was verified by a photo. This meant the last read written by the meter reader on the meter reading sheet was incorrect. The customer was overcharged by 53kL.	Debt raised in error	FM
Retail water account	11967	\$72.96	A leak was identified at the customer's water meter union and Rous staff have repaired the leak. Since a leak at the meter union is deemed to be an 'infrastructure failure', a credit of \$72.96 was calculated based on the average daily usage for the same quarter last year.	Debt Not lawfully recoverable	FM
Retail water account	11308	\$27.36	During the quarter 4 meter reading cycle, the read data showed that the usage was less than last quarter. A photo of the meter read confirmed that the previous reading cycle in February 2024 was incorrect. The customer was overcharged by 9kL.	Debt raised in error	FM
Retail water account	10459	\$30.40	The customer had a leak in April 2024 and could not turn the isolation valve off to stop the leak. They advised Rous of the issue on 17/04/2024 and a staff member was on site the same day to fix the issue resulting in minimal water loss. However, Rous acknowledged that some water loss was caused by the faulty tap at the meter. 10kL was recommended to be written off.	Debt Not lawfully recoverable	FM
Retail water account	10750	\$47.17	The customer was charged the backflow facility fee in error as this charge had been postponed to October 2024. A manual adjustment was required on all the accounts that were already setup with the fee. At the time an oversight meant that this account was charged by error and needed to be credited.	Debt raised in error	FM
Retail water account	10723	\$47.70	The customer was charged the backflow facility fee in error as this charge had been postponed to October 2024. A manual adjustment was required on all the accounts that were already setup with the fee. At the time an oversight meant that this account was charged by error and needed to be credited.	Debt raised in error	FM
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$433.86</b>			

Debts written off above \$ 5,000

Debts approved for write-off by Council resolution during the period 1 January 2024 to 30 June 2024 are tabled below.

**Table 2:**

Customer type	Ref. number	Write-off amount	Background	Reason	Resolution
Retail water account	10625	\$7,922.94	The customer's pipe was likely damaged by Rous' work in the Weigel Creek area. It is believed that a Rous contractor had inadvertently damaged the poly pipe with their equipment, resulting in the service connection being separated from a fitting to a 50L drum. The lever on the 90-degree ball valve has likely caught on the ground, a tree root or vines thereby causing it to open, resulting in the undetected discharge of water through the customer's water meter. We recommended the write-off of the excess usage (2,606kL) of water as result of the work performed by Rous and inability to identify the cause of the leak with absolute certainty.	Debt Not lawfully recoverable	26/24
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,922.94</b>			

**Governance**

- **Finance**

Charges written off during the period 1 January 2024 to 30 June 2024 total \$ 8,356.80 and this amount will be included in Council's Annual Report.

- **Legal**

Clause 131(6) of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* requires the General Manager to inform Council of any amounts written off under delegated authority.

**Conclusion**

Charges totalling \$ 8,356.80 were written-off under Council resolution and delegated authority pursuant to clauses 131 or 213 of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*. The next debt write-off information summary report will be included in the February 2025 business paper.

## Delivery program | Operational plan result for year ending 30 June 2024

Responsible Officer: General Manager (Phillip Rudd)

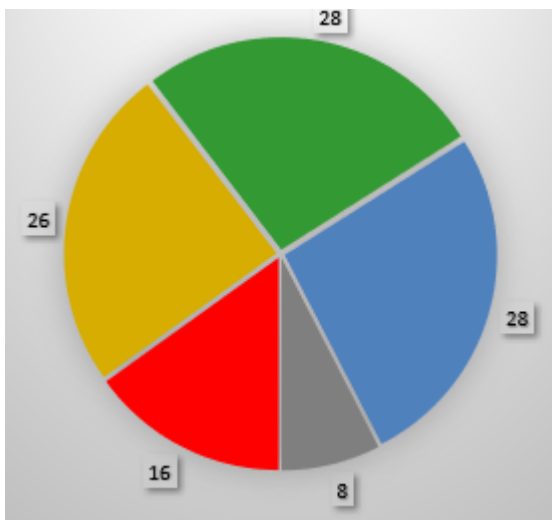
### Recommendation

That Council receive and note this report and attachment regarding performance against delivery of the actions of the Delivery program | Operational Plan for the year ending 30 June 2024 (Y2 – Q4).

### Background

This report relates to and provides information about Council's achievement of the performance targets in the Integrated Planning and Reporting Delivery program | Operational plan for Y2 – Q4 year end result.

#### • Year ending 30 June 2024 Delivery program | Operational plan result



- 28 of the indicators are **blue** (28%)
- 28 of the indicators are **green** (28%)
- 26 of the indicators are **amber** (26%)
- 16 of the indicators are **red** (16%)
- 8 of the indicators are **grey** (8%)

**Blue: Complete.**

**Green:** On track according to schedule or not yet due to have started.

**Amber:** In progress but behind schedule.

**Red:** Corrective action required.

**Grey:** No longer required.

### Legal

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993*, the General Manager must ensure that regular reports (at least every six months) are provided to Council outlining progress against delivery of the activities detailed in the Delivery program.

### Consultation

This report and the information in the attachment has been compiled in consultation with management and staff.

### Conclusion

This report provides a summary of the final result for performance against the planned actions in the Delivery program | Operational plan for the year ending 30 June 2024, being Y2 of the Delivery program.

### Attachment

1. Delivery program | Operational plan result for year ending 30 June 2024

# IP&R Operational Plan

## Reporting period: Quarter 4 - 1 April 2024 to 30 June 2024

Legend:

Attachment 1

Blue: COMPLETE. Comment mandatory.

Green: ACCEPTABLE. On track according to schedule or not yet due to have started.  
No comment required.

Amber: MONITOR. In progress but behind schedule. Comment mandatory.

Red: REVIEW. Corrective action required. Comment mandatory.

Grey: NO LONGER REQ. Comment mandatory.

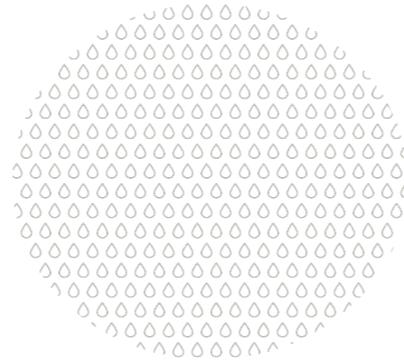
## Sustainable delivery

### Our priorities include:

- Contributing to the protection and enhancement of our region's environment and natural resources.
- Taking steps to strengthen our response to climate change impacts and reducing our carbon emissions.
- Planning for future demands as our region's population grows.
- Sustainably using our available resources.
- Sound business planning and ongoing improvement.

### Objectives:

- 1.1 A healthy environment.
- 1.2 Responding to climate change.
- 1.3 Water security, quality and sustainable consumption.
- 1.4 A sustainable Council.



NO 'COMMENTS' REQUIRED IF GREEN

Delivery objectives	2023-2024 Actions	What is being measured	Target	Responsibility	Comment Q4 UPDATE	STATUS for this quarter
1.1.1 Environmentally responsible procurement.	1.1.1.1 Review local supplier relationships and resourcing of specialist procurement arrangements.	At least one in-house preferred supplier panel established.	By June 2024	HSEL	Not actioned due to competing priorities. Action to be carried forward to new financial year.	●
1.1.2 Sustainable river system health through natural resource management.	1.1.2.1 Undertake scheduled 2023-24 actions of the Catchment and Coastal Zone Management plans.	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 90%	CCAM	Progress on the RCC Catchment Management Plan has been on track with strong progress on the River Reach Programs and engagement activities. Work on planning controls under the CMP will carry forward into 2024/25. CZMP-funded projects include riverbank restorations works at Coraki which have progressed well - some delays experienced associated with ground conditions however as these are multi-year projects works will continue in 2024/25.	●
	1.1.2.2 Continue to deliver the Active Floodgate Management Program – highlighting the expected improvement to water quality.	All required training of landowner volunteers completed. All required plans reviewed and updated.	By June 2024 By June 2024	FMM FMM		● ●
1.1.3 Enhance the region's biosecurity through combatting the spread of targeted weeds.	1.1.3.1 Deliver scheduled 2023-24 actions of the Weed Action Plan.	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 95%	WBBRM	2023 - 2024 WAP targets met, final report submitted to DPI and LLS through NSW DPI WIDX Portal. Declaration of WAP expenditure signed off by GM and submitted to SLSO Regional Weed Coordinator	●
	1.1.3.2 Liaise with constituent councils about possible Rous role in fee for service weed control in local parks, reserves and roadsides.	Explore opportunities, cost options and discuss with constituents.	By June 2024	WBBRM	Tweed approved budget for additional weed control services to be supplied by Rous, securing weed control resources and staff currently in progress, aim to have up and running in 8-12 weeks. Richmond Valley has agreed to resource sharing (depot) no additional services. Kyogle not expressed interested. Other councils not consulted yet.	●
1.2.1 Achieve carbon neutrality.	1.2.1.1 Deliver schedule 2023-24 actions of the Renewable Energy and Emissions Reduction Plan.	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 90%	IPM	Renewable Energy and Emissions Reduction Plan adopted in October 2023 for implementation from 2024/25.	●
	1.2.1.2 Plant trees to contribute to offsetting our carbon emissions.	# of trees planted.	Subject to Plan outcomes	CCAM WBBRM		●
1.2.2 We are prepared and able to respond to climate change impacts.	1.2.2.1 Collate and analyse data to inform the Strategic Review of Flood Mitigation.	Collation and analysis complete.	By June 2024	GMPD		●
	1.2.2.2 Engage with the NSW Government and other floodplain stakeholders to pursue opportunities and funding to better understand the impacts of a changing climate on the floodplain and the strategic direction.	Discussion paper shared with stakeholders and NSW Government. Written representation to NSW Government agencies made on need for strategic direction on natural resource impact of flood mitigation assets.	By June 2024	FMM	Council resolved a position regarding low-lying, high-risk rural floodplain areas based on the findings of the Discussion Paper.  Rous provided a response to the State Government's MEMS Coastal Floodplain Drainage Options Report (2023) in April 2024 and made reference to position adopted by Council. Rous suggested that the State Government undertakes a review of current floodplain land uses, particularly those relating to the lowest lying land (i.e. less than 1m above mean sea level) and develops a long-term strategic direction on how different areas of the floodplain will be used, acknowledging all stakeholders including First Nations. Funding to progress this work will be sought as relevant programs and opportunities become available.	■
1.3.1 Short-term (to 2040) water supply demands are able to be met.	1.3.1.1 (2022/23) Undertake scheduled 2022-23 actions of the Future Water Project.	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 90%	FWPM	Proposed Dunoan Dam Cultural Heritage and Biodiversity Assessments delayed due to ongoing engagement with Key Stakeholders. Anticipated completion in the second half of 2025. Marom Creek contract in final stages of review with Ballina Shire Council. Anticipated this will be finalised in July/August of 2024. Woodburn Groundwater Scheme Sec 60 process well underway and Flood Recovery Works being undertaken by NSW Public Works is commencing in August 2024.	●
	1.3.1.1 Implement project plans for Stage 1 of Future Water Project for Alstonville and Woodburn groundwater schemes.	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 90%	FWPM	As above	●



	1.3.1.2 Administer residential rainwater tank rebates.	# of rebates processed.	Report by occurrence	WSO	22 approved applications as at 30/06/2024. Program reflects customer demand and a reduced number of applications overall. This is likely due to factors including current cost of living pressures and the very wet year. Although there has been less applications received for 23/24, the Program is considered ontrack.	
	1.3.1.3 Monitor water quality to ensure compliance with Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.	# of occasions of non-compliance.	Results meet Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 95th percentile compliance.	DTM DEM	Three non-compliances for pH slightly above 8.5 AWDG guideline value.	
	1.3.1.4 Implement Future Water Project stakeholder communication and engagement plans.	Y1 actions completed.	By June 2024	FWPM	Complete as per plan.	
	1.3.1.5 Implement a project plan for the planning and investigations of a groundwater scheme at Tyagarah (Stage 2 of the Future Water Project).	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 80%	FWPM	The need for additional assessments has been identified and these have been commenced.	
	1.3.1.6 Continue investigations and planning to ensure drought readiness.	Emergency sources determined.	By June 2024	FWPM	Complete to the extent possible given the status of the overall Future Water Program and the absence of an outcome on all future water investigations.	
1.3.2 Source options to meet long- term water supply demands are better understood.	1.3.2.1 Undertake further investigations of Stage 3 source options to support future decision making	Study completed.	By June 2024	FWPM	Proposed Dunoon Dam Cultural Heritage and Biodiversity Assessments delayed due to ongoing engagement with Key Stakeholders. Anticipated completion in the second half of 2025. Desalination and PRW investigations completed.	
	1.3.2.2 Investigate potential to source groundwater from the Richmond Area Coastal Floodplain Alluvial Groundwater Source.	Study completed.	By June 2024	FWPM	Work is being undertaken to develop a better understanding of the viability of the option by way of utilizing state monitoring bores which has extended the timeframe somewhat from what was originally planned.	
	1.3.2.4 Review and update secure yield assessment with latest data and modelling tools.	Secure yield assessment completed	By June 2024	FWPM	Further delays have occurred in the consultation process. Council is awaiting advice from NSW DCCEEW on the recommended approach to climate change analysis when developing likely future climate projections to assess future water supply yield.	
1.3.3 Our water supply is valued and used responsibly.	1.3.3.1 (2022/23) Undertake scheduled 2022-23 actions for the Regional Demand Management Plan.	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 90% by December 2023	WSO		
	1.3.3.1 Undertake scheduled 2023-24 actions for the Regional Demand Management Plan.	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 90%	WSO	Achievement of target of at least 90% by December 2024 on track. Currently at 80% or 4/5 RDMP Program ontrack. The behaviour Change Pilot Program is the only component that has experienced a delayed start. This, however, is not foreseen to impact overall delivery by of the RDMP by June 2026.	
	1.3.3.2 Design a behaviour-change pilot program to understand community attitudes to responsible water use.	Consultant engaged and initial program designed.	By June 2024	WSO	Detailed Program Delivery Plan prepared and supported internally for execution during 24/25 and 25/26. Although this Program experienced initial delays, these are not foreseen to impact overall Program delivery by June 2026.	
	1.3.3.3 Develop a Regional Water Education Program.	Program approved by Leadership Team.	By December 2023	RWEO	The Ripple Effect Water Wise Schools Program has delivered its first pilot with Alstonville Primary School. The initial Program framework has been designed though will continue to be built upon and tested.	
	1.3.3.4 Implement a Regional Water Education Program.	% of scheduled actions for 2023-24 completed.	At least 80%	RWEO	Engagement events and presentations to 13 schools including collaborations with environmental based organisations complete by June 2024.	
	1.3.3.5 Implement the Water Loss Management Plan.	% of scheduled 2023-24 actions completed.	At least 90%	DEM	WLMP actions completed included acoustic leak detection, procurement of active leak detection equipment and and training in leak detection methods, procurement of network calming valve and additional bulk meters to be installed in 2024-25.	
	1.3.3.6 Continue implementation of smart metering and backflow prevention program for retail customers.	On ground works completed.	By June 2024	SMPM	On ground works have progressed during the year, and are planned for completion in early August 2024.	
	1.3.3.7 Provide an interim update to the Drought Management Plan while investigations continue into future water sources.	Interim Drought Management Plan adopted by Council	By December 2023	WSO	Interim Drought Management Plan unable to be completed while desalination investigations were underway. With that work now completed, Drought Management Plan work can be restarted.	
	1.3.3.8 Strategic Review of the Emigrant Creek Water Treatment Plant to optimise operations, maintenance, utilisation and production capability.	Study completed.	By June 2024	SPE	The Contract program resulted in this project being a multi-year project straddling two financial years hence non-completion in the 2024 financial year. Final deliverables will be achieved in 1st quarter of 2024/25. The Contract is progressing well and at 90% completion.	
1.3.4 The region's water supply capacity is enhanced.	1.3.4.1 Undertake studies into purified recycled water and determine a position regarding purified recycled water as a future water security option.	Report to Council	June 2024	RWPM	The study is complete and a presentation of the findings has been delivered to Council however the final report will be provided in August 2024.	
1.4.1 Our resources are planned, prioritised and implemented to ensure Rous's sustainability	1.4.1.1 Undertake scheduled actions within the 2023-24 Resourcing Strategy.	% of scheduled actions completed - Asset Management Strategy and Plan.	At least 90%	AMSO	Scheduled actions were amended or deferred due to resourcing constraints and transfer of focus to Project NOVUS.	
		% of scheduled actions completed - Workforce Management Plan.	At least 90%	PCM	PC 18/7: Planning and scoping exercise scheduled for 1/8 with PCTL and GMT&S to clearly articulate and plan initiatives	

	1.4.1.2 Deliver the 2023-24 Capital Works program.	% of program completed.	At least 80%	IPM DTEM DEM	Changes were made to the scheduled program of works during the year as a result of resourcing constraints and the need to amend priorities to manage future year cashflow as a result of upcoming major capital expenditure. These changes were reported to Council and adopted through the QBRS and budget processes. Deferred projects have been rescheduled in future years commencing 2024-25.	●
		% of spending achieved.	At least 80% of funds committed or spent.	IPM DTEM DEM		●
	1.4.1.3 Develop a guiding strategy and plan for the finalisation of Perradenya land development.	Strategy adopted by Council.	By December 2023	PMRP	Refer to Council resolution 42/23.	■
		Scheduled actions for 2023-2024 completed.	At least 90%	PMRP	Actions commenced in accordance with 42/23. To be progressed in 2024/25.	●
1.4.2 Rous's revenue stream is strengthened.	1.4.2.1 Implement the adopted development servicing plans for Bulk Water and Retail Water supplies.	Revenue through developer fees is increased.	5% on 2022-2023 levels	PDE	Planning & Development Engineer role has been vacant for most of the year.	●
1.4.3 A positive risk management culture is embedded and sustained.	1.4.3.1 (2022/23) Review the currency and operability of Emergency Response plans following recent major flood events.	Review complete.	By December 2023	RAS	Updates to the technical content of Incident Management Plans have largely been completed by Subject Matter Experts and will now be collated and presented to the Leadership Team for approval.	●
	1.4.3.1 Test emergency response plans and update business continuity plans.	Plans tested and updated.	At least once by June 2024	RAS	This activity has been rolled into Phase 2 of the Enterprise Risk Management review identified for delivery in the 2024/25 Operational Plan and Delivery Program.	●
	1.4.3.2 (2022/23) Update Council's Risk Management Plan and review the Risk Register to respond to outcomes of recent major flood events.	Plan and Register closed.	By June 2024	RAS		●
	1.4.3.2 Update Council's annual Risk Management Plan and update Risk Register structure and format.	Plan and Register closed.	By June 2024	RAS	A detailed activity plan is in place to uplift Council's Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) framework. Between March - June 2024, the Risk Management Policy was updated, an ERM business process mapped, a risk culture survey conducted, a new ERM framework document drafted to 70% completion, and the existing risk registers from 2017 to date consolidated - peer review and streamlining of this consolidated data is currently underway.	●
	1.4.3.3 Implementation of the Dams Safety Management System in compliance with Dams Safety Regulation 2019.	Updated operations and maintenance 'manuals' and 'plans' for Emigrant Creek Dam and Rocky Creek Dam.	By December 2023	GMPD SPE DTEM	Operations and maintenance 'manuals' and 'plans' have been updated for Emigrant Creek Dam and Rocky Creek Dam.	■
		Complete detailed risk assessments and safety review report for Emigrant Creek Dam.	By December 2023	GMPD SPE DTEM	Dam Break and Consequence category study has been updated. Program was delayed but back on track with progress on undertaking the Safety Review and Risk Report.	●
		Progressing with detailed risk assessments and safety review report for Rocky Creek Dam.	By June 2024	GMPD SPE DTEM	Work is underway and expected to be completed during 1st half of 24/25.	●
1.4.4 Ongoing service reviews, audits and business improvements achieve enhanced organisational outcomes.	1.4.4.1 Complete prioritised service reviews based on recommended focus areas identified by Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee.	# of service reviews completed.	At least 1	GRM	An Information Management review was undertaken in February 2024 in accordance with Council's Internal Audit Strategy 2022-26 endorsed by its Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC).	■
		% of review recommendations implemented.	At least 50% within 12 months of date of recommendation	GRM	24 recommendations were made as part of the internal audit report on the IT General Controls review issued in November 2022. As at November 2023, 75% of the report recommendations had been implemented (i.e. only 6 recommendations remained in-progress).	■
	1.4.1.2 Progressive implementation of works management system.	Evidence of proactive works allocation and completion.	Upward trend.	DEM DTEM	Proactive maintenance program implemented for water distribution operations. Customer service requests being completed through Confirm asset management system. Works allocation and completion will move to new system to be implemented in the next 12 months under Project Novus. Proactively upgrading obsolete telemetry equipment at reservoirs and plants to prevent unplanned failures.	■
	1.4.4.3 Progressive updating of Dam Safety Management System documents and plans.	Annual completion of surveillance inspections and updating of dam safety documents and plans as required in the Dam Safety Management System document.	By December 2023	GMO SPE DTEM	Annual surveillance inspections and annual updating of dam safety documents and plans for completed for 2023.	■
		Completion of the Dam Safety Standard reports for Emigrant Creek Dam and Rocky Creek Dam.	By 31 March 2024	GMO SPE DTEM	Dam Safety Standard reports for Emigrant Creek Dam and Rocky Creek Dam completed for 2023.	■
	1.4.4.4 (2022/23) Review and align all proactive operational maintenance plans for water and flood assets as part of ongoing improvements to service.	All operational maintenance plans reviewed, updated and implemented.	By June 2024	DEM DTEM	Proactive maintenance program implemented for water distribution operations in March 2024.	■
	1.4.4.4 Business process capture and re-engineering.	# of processes reviewed that directly relate to the Digital Transformation program.	As per project plan	GMCC		●
Delivery of process efficiency improvements. Measured in time or cost savings; with consideration to risk.		Reduction in time, cost, and/or risk.	GMCC		●	

## External relationships

### Our priorities include:

- Building community understanding of the breadth of functions and results that Council delivers across the region.
- Being well positioned to respond to the diversity of our communities' needs and aspirations.
- Ensuring we proactively and positively engage with our constituent councils so that they understand and support our future direction.
- Maintaining strong relationships with others to promote positive business, environment and community outcomes.
- Being well positioned to win State Government funding opportunities.
- Sound business planning and ongoing improvement.

### Objectives:

- 2.1 Strong and mutually respectful relationships with our constituent councils.
- 2.2 People across our region understand the work that we do.
- 2.3 Our working relationships with political, regulatory and industry stakeholders are effective and achieve results.

NO 'COMMENTS' REQUIRED IF GREEN

Delivery objectives	2023-2024 Actions	What is being measured	Target	Responsibility	Comment Q4 UPDATE	STATUS for this quarter
2.1.1 Effective collaboration and communication with our constituent councils.	2.1.1.1 Improve relationships with constituent councils' Communications and Engagement teams through regular catch-up events.	Number of events.	At least 2 events.	CCM		●
	2.1.1.2 Evaluate pricing model methodology.	Update of bulk water methodology to reflect a 2-part (fixed/variable) tariff.	By October 2023	FM	The 'parallel' run using the proposed new pricing methodology is planned for 8 months through to 31 December 2025. Constituent Councils have been contacted to provide update meter data to enable the calculations to be performed and compared to the existing methodology.	●
2.2.1 Communities across our region are kept informed of Rous's work and have opportunities to engage with us.	2.2.1.1 Identify target businesses for the Sustainable Water Partnership pilot program.	Spread across target groups.	At least 2 target groups	WSO	This program is completed and work has started on a new program for 2024/25	■
	2.2.1.2 Provide opportunities for engagement through face-to-face activities, social media, website and customer service offerings.	Increase in social media followers.	At least 1,500 in total across all social media platforms	CCM	Social media following across all platforms currently totals 2216	●
		# of telephone call-backs received. Increase in website visitation. Use of available online tools, i.e., e-forms, SMS alert registrations, 'report a weed' form, views of Issuu documents.	No target Report by occurrence	CCM		●
	2.2.1.3 Monitor Rous website to ensure content complies with WCAG level AA standards.	Compliance.	100%	CCM		●
	2.2.1.4 Provide timely and accurate information using appropriate media.	Number of media releases. Number of social media posts. Number of website news articles.	No target Report by occurrence	CCM	Media Releases: 0 Instagram: 46 Facebook: 64 LinkedIn: 0 Total = 113 Website news articles = 6	●
2.3.1 Our positive working relationships support the achievement of regional outcomes.	2.2.1.5 Support Rous projects and activities through the development and implementation of communication and marketing campaigns.	Number of projects and activities supported.	No target Report by occurrence	CCM	Future Water, Smart Meters, Miconia Campaign, Weed Biosecurity Campaign, Water conservation and the Byron watermain replacement.	●
	2.3.1.1 Pursue funding opportunities that support agreed regional objectives where delivery is primarily Rous's responsibility.	\$ value of funding received.	At least \$100,000	GM	Target met	■
	2.3.1.2 Actively participate in the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation.	% of scheduled meetings attended.	100%	GM	Target met	■
2.3.2 Water consuming businesses and industry are engaged to promote sustainable water consumption.	2.3.1.3 Provide end to end support for the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation.	NRJO is compliant with its obligations and services provided within budget allocation.	100%	GM	Target met	■
	2.3.2.1 (2022/23) Undertake scheduled 2022-23 actions of the Regional Demand Management Plan.	% of scheduled Rous's actions completed.	At least 90% by December 2023	WSO	Target met	■
2.3.3 Local Aboriginal history and culture is respected, and we positively engage with our First Nations communities.	2.3.2.1 Undertake scheduled 2023-24 actions of the Regional Demand Management Plan.	% of scheduled Rous's actions completed.	At least 90%	WSO		●
		2.3.3.1 Implement Rous's Reconciliation Action Plan.	Review actions to ensure relevance and currency. Complete scheduled actions.	By June 2024 By assigned due date	CCAM CCAM	Actions reviewed and progress reported to RAPAG. Overall good progress on RAP actions, with progress reported to RAPAG.
2.3.4 Local community groups are positively engaged to support the achievement of shared objectives.	2.3.3.1 Implement Rous's Reconciliation Action Plan.	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 90%	CCM	•46% of actions are now BAU •15% of actions being delivered through the branding and marketing strategy. •7% of actions being delivered through the NOVUS project. •7% of actions being delivered through the website project.	●
		2.3.4.1 Undertake scheduled 2023-24 actions of the Communications and Engagement Strategy.				
2.3.5 Regional collaboration informs policy and innovative approaches to priority issues.	2.3.5.1 Actively contribute to the Weeds and Pest Advisory Committees as part of our flood and water policy contribution.	# of meetings participated in.	At least 90%	GM	Target met	■
		Nature of outcomes achieved.	Report by occurrence	GM	Target met	■
	2.3.5.2 Collaborate with State and other agencies including Health, Local Land Services, Dept of Primary Industries and Water Services Association of Australia.	Nature of collaboration outcomes.	Report by occurrence	WBBRM DTEM DEM	Consultation undertaken with Health in strategic reviews of water treatment plants.	■

## Our people

### Our priorities include:

- Forecasting future workforce skill needs.
- Being an employer our employees are proud to work for.
- Creating opportunities for our staff to learn and develop skills that are needed for achieving our organisational objectives.

### Objectives:

- 3.1 Our future workforce requirements are confirmed.
- 3.2 Innovative solutions are applied to addressing skills gaps.
- 3.3 Leaders at all levels.
- 3.4 We are recognised as an employer of choice.



NO 'COMMENTS' REQUIRED IF GREEN

Delivery objectives	2023-2024 Actions	What is being measured	Target	Responsibility	Comment Q4 UPDATE	STATUS for this quarter	
3.1.1 We know our workforce and skills requirements to achieve our Delivery Program commitments.	3.1.1.1 Develop a Change Management Framework.	% of respondents reporting and understanding of rationale and impact of change through pulse surveys.	Upward trend	PCM	Pulse surveys have not been commenced so no trend can be measured. We will look to commence pulse surveys (or similar) in the 2024/25 year.	●	
3.2.1 Specialist and hard-to-recruit skills are available to Rous when needed.	3.2.1.1 Implement Workforce Management Plan actions related to filling hard-to-recruit roles.	% of positions advertised and filled following recruitment process.	At least 90%	PCM	ELMO reporting mechanisms being reviewed to best track time spend to fill efficiencies. Reporting as part of Business Performance Pack June 2024. Sourcing and relationship building with specialised recruitment agencies continues. This is agile space dependant on market trends. To be formally documented.	●	
	3.2.1.2 Create alternative employment pathways: scholarships, cadetships, graduate or trainee programs.	% of staff are employed via this pathway.	At least 4%	PCM	Initial scoping and conversations with the business around specific needs have been conducted. We continue to research relevant programs that exist within the market place. Further traction expected with allocated budgets in 2025/2026.	●	
	3.2.1.3 Review, update and expand the visibility of the Employee Value Proposition.	Employee Value Proposition is publicly available.	By 31 December 2023	PCM	EVP content put on hold due to rebranding and relocation. Best approach to capture future state (post rebranding and relocation) dialogue. Deliver 2025/2026	●	
	3.2.1.4 Complete staff skills and interests inventory through annual performance appraisal process.	Inventory complete.	By 31 January 2024	PCM	As part of performance reviews added detail is captured identifying additional skill sets of staff. Reporting to be fine tuned to best service where this information is best placed.	●	
	3.2.1.5 Ensure succession planning for business critical roles.	Succession plans in place.	By 31 December 2023	PCM	Scheduled to be conducted in the 2nd quarter of the new financial year. On hold due to People and Culture staff resources.	●	
	3.2.1.6 Establish a suite of workforce metrics that support managers with workforce planning.	Suite of workforce metrics developed and reporting available to managers.	By 31 December 2023	PCM	Metrics identified and incrementally integrated into the Business Performance Pack. Reliant on accurate payroll data which will be better serviced with the launch of the new Payroll system (iChris).	●	
3.3.1 Our leaders and emerging leaders are provided with development opportunities.	3.3.1.1 Implement leadership development actions of the Workforce Management Plan.	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 90%	PCM	90% of actions have not been completed. Delivering against the WMP actions has been significantly impacted by resourcing shortages and competing priorities in the P&C space. The achievability of the plan is being revisited.	●	
3.4.1 Our staff are proud to work for Rous.	3.4.1.1 Recognise and celebrate achievements and staff contributions through regular staff communications.	% of staff who report being proud to work for Rous.	At least 90%	PCM	Pulse surveys have not been commenced so no trend can be measured. We will look to commence pulse surveys (or similar) in the 2024/25 year.	●	
		Open rate of internal e-newsletter.	At least 90%	CCM	Open rate averages across the quarter is 84.1%.	●	
	3.4.1.2 Implement changes to internal communication with a focus on staff engagement and feedback.	Impact of internal communication initiatives on level of staff engagement and satisfaction.	Upward trend quarter-on-quarter	PCM	18/7 PC: It was agreed that internal communications would continue to be managed by the Communications team.	●	
3.4.2 Our workplace is accessible, inclusive and safe.	3.4.2.1 Develop new Disability Inclusion Action Plan.	Plan finalised and approved.	By 31 December 2023	PCM		●	
	3.4.2.2 (2022/23) Review the Work Health and Safety Management System.	Review completed.	By December 2023	HSEL	The review of our Work Health and Safety Management System has experienced some delays due to the size and scope of the project. Ensuring that the system meets all regulatory requirements and aligns with industry best practices has required thorough research, consultation with stakeholders, and careful planning. Additionally, the integration of the WHSMS with existing business processes and systems has necessitated additional time to ensure a seamless and effective implementation.	●	
	3.4.2.2 Coordinate and deliver a NSW Women's Week 2024 event.	Event delivered.	By April 2024	CCM		●	
	3.4.2.3 Implement Council's Health Safety and Environment policy and systems.	Employee days lost.	0 lost time injuries		HSEL	Continuously monitor LTI rates and adjust strategies accordingly, fostering a workplace where safety is paramount.	●
		Event reporting.	Upward trend		HSEL	Reporting continues to improve across all metrics, particularly in Weekly Motor vehicle inspections.	●
	Digitisation of business processes.	No paper-based business processes		HSEL		●	

# Leadership and innovation

## Our priorities include:

- Confirming our role as a regional leader.
- Expanding Rous's role in the region to provide a more consistent and cohesive service delivery model on behalf of our constituent councils.
- Exploring new technologies and approaches to addressing regional issues where Council may contribute to the solution.
- Responding proactively to a changing regulatory environment.

## Objectives:

- 4.1 Be recognised for leadership in what we do.
- 4.2 Effective use of technology supports the achievement of organisational objectives.
- 4.3 We embrace innovation and continually improve the way we do business.

NO 'COMMENTS' REQUIRED IF GREEN

Delivery objectives	2023-2024 Actions	What is being measured	Target	Responsibility	Comment Q4 UPDATE	STATUS for this quarter
4.1.1 Embed reconciliation in Rous's culture through its people and partners.	4.1.1.1 Undertake scheduled 2023-24 actions of the Reconciliation Action Plan.	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 90%	CCAM		●
4.1.2 Demonstrate effective leadership through the delivery of our commitments and reporting on our progress and results.	4.1.2.1 Prepare an annual Operational Plan, Budget and Annual Report to demonstrate Council's progress in achieving its Delivery Program commitments.	2024-25 Operational Plan and Budget adopted.	By June 2024	GMPP FBP	<i>This has been completed and adopted by Council at the June 2024 Ordinary Council meeting.</i>	■
	4.1.2.2 Report on Service Level Agreement implementation and performance.	2022-23 Annual Report published.	By 30 November 2023	CCM	<i>Completed by target date.</i>	■
4.2.1 Our business systems and data support us to achieve organisational results.	4.2.1.1 Deliver enhanced financial   budgets   actuals reporting.	Timeliness of and access to data through management reporting.	By December 2023	FM	<i>Completed.</i>	■
	4.2.1.2 Commence implementation of digital transformation program.	Adherence to project plan.	Achieved	GMCC	<i>Vendor onboarding. Design commenced</i>	●
4.2.2 Finding and promoting opportunities for technology alignment and compatibility across our region's councils.	4.2.2.1 Initiate the development of a position paper through the Northern Rivers Information Technology Managers Group.	Position paper completed and reported to LT.	By December 2023	ICTM		●
		Number of quick wins implemented as a result of the position paper.	At least 1	ICTM		●
4.3.1 Successful consolidation of Rous administration and depots to achieve business improvements and optimisation.	4.3.1.1 Develop and implement scope of works for workplace consolidation plan and commence relocation to Gallans Road site.	Obtain regulatory approval.	By August 2023	PMRP	<i>DA lodged with BSC in July 2023. RFI responded to in January and June 2024. Awaiting determination.</i>	●
		Confirm site plan and project scheduling.	By August 2023	PMRP	<i>Construction program agreed, commencement subject to DA</i>	●
		Award construction contract.	By December 2023	PMRP	<i>Contract negotiations proceeding in respect of DA.</i>	●
		Adherence to Project Communication Plan.	Achieved	PMRP		●
4.3.2 Continuous improvement in our delivery of a bulk water supply.	4.3.2.1 Report on Service Level Agreement implementation and performance.	Project information updates available, timely and accessible to staff, incl. feedback loop pathways in place.	At least 90% open rate for information shared via digital channels (incl. ELMO)	PMRP		●
		4.3.2.2 Proactively seek feedback from constituent councils on bulk water supply delivery performance.	Performance of Rous bulk water supply delivery.	6-monthly engagement with key contacts at constituent councils	GMO	<i>Duplicate of 4.1.2.2. SLA reports provided to constituent councils</i>
4.3.3 Proactive contribution as part of a regional response to flood mitigation.	4.3.3.1 Actively participate in ongoing flood response initiatives.	Betterment of Rous flood mitigation urban levee asset condition.	Lismore Levee, East Coraki, Woodburn town drain	FMM		●
		Performance of Rous flood mitigation.	90% of Rous rural floodgate assets at condition score of 3 or better	FMM		●
	4.3.3.2 (2022/23) Progress discussions with Lismore City Council regarding the long-term arrangements for the Lismore Levee.	Revised draft MOU available for discussion.	By June 2024	GM	<i>No further update - Awaiting Asset Management Plan</i>	●

## Reports / Actions Pending

*Responsible Officer: General Manager (Phillip Rudd)*

### Recommendation

That the report be received and noted.

### Background

Following is a list of pending resolutions with individual comments provided on current position and expected completion date.

<b>COUNCIL MEETING 13-12-2023</b>	
<b>Report</b>	<b>Proposed Dunoon Dam - acquisition of properties</b>
	<i>Responsible Officer: Group Manager Planning and Delivery (Andrew Logan)</i>
<b>Resolution</b>	(Breum/Cadwallader) that Council: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. To reconfirm its prior position in relation to acquisition of land in the Proposed Dunoon Dam area as shown in the Attachment 1 and land of strategic interest to the Future Water Strategy 2060.</li> <li>b. The terms of such acquisition are to be in accordance with Council's current 'Land Management' policy, Item 4 (Attachment 2), namely:</li> <li>c. Acquisition to be upon offer of sale by existing landowner.</li> <li>d. Meets the proposed operational need or strategic objective of the future water strategy 2060.</li> <li>e. Such acquisition costs to be calculated with due consideration to market and strategic value.</li> </ol>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>June 2024 - An update to Council regarding strategic land purchases for the Future Water Strategy 2060 will be provided at the December 2024 Council meeting.</b>
<b>Report</b>	<b>Update on interim arrangements for Lismore Levee Scheme</b>
	<i>Responsible Officer: Group Manager Planning and Delivery (Andrew Logan)</i>
<b>Resolution</b>	(Rob/Cadwallader) that Council in addition to previous resolutions on the matter: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Receive and note this update.</li> <li>2. Authorise the General Manager to approve access to the Lismore Levee Scheme assets by Lismore City Council (LCC) for the purposes of progressing new asset construction and renewal and upgrade work under the <i>Northern Rivers Recovery and Resilience Program (NRRRP)</i>, subject to LCC's written confirmation that they will assume ownership of the new, upgraded and renewed assets.</li> </ol>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Receive a further update before end of December 2024.</b>

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## Confidential matters

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### Recommendation

That Council move into Closed Council to consider the following matters and the meeting be closed to members of the public and press based on the grounds detailed below:

Report	Perradenya update
<b>Grounds for closure</b>	1. Section 10A(2)(d) commercial information of a confidential nature that would, if disclosed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i). prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it, or</li> <li>(ii). confer a commercial advantage on a competitor of the Council, or</li> <li>(iii). reveal a trade secret.</li> </ol>



### *Section 10A, Local Government Act, 1993:*

A Council may close to the public only so much of its meeting as comprises the receipt or discussion of any of the following:

#### *Section 10A(2):*

- a) personnel matters concerning particular individuals (other than councillors),
- b) the personal hardship of any resident or ratepayer,
- c) information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business,
- d) commercial information of a confidential nature that would, if disclosed:
  - (i). prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it, or
  - (ii). confer a commercial advantage on a competitor of the Council, or
  - (iii). reveal a trade secret,
- e) information that would, if disclosed, prejudice the maintenance of law,
- f) matters affecting the security of the council, councillors, council staff or council property,
- g) advice concerning litigation, or advice that would otherwise be privileged from production in legal proceedings on the ground of legal professional privilege,
- h) information concerning the nature and location of a place or an item of Aboriginal significance on community land,
- i) alleged contraventions of any code of conduct requirements applicable under section 440.

#### *Section 10A(4):*

Council may allow members of the public to make representations to or at a meeting before any part of the meeting is closed to the public, as to whether that part of the meeting should be closed.

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